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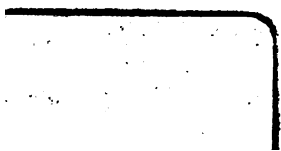
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**BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL  
ESSAYS.**

**VOL. I.**



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ESSAYS:**

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# CONTENTS

OF

## THE FIRST VOLUME.

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	PAGE
THE PEARLS AND MOCK PEARLS OF HISTORY . . .	1
FREDERIC VON GENTZ . . . . .	71
MARIA EDGEWORTH: HER LIFE AND WRITINGS . . .	130
THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING AS A MAN OF LETTERS	187
MARSHAL SAXE . . . . .	228
SYLVAIN VAN DE WEYER . . . . .	281
ALEXANDER DUMAS . . . . .	293
SALONS . . . . .	350
WHIST AND WHIST-PLAYERS . . . . .	384



# ESSAYS.

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## THE PEARLS AND MOCK PEARLS OF HISTORY.

(FROM THE QUARTERLY REVIEW, APRIL, 1861.)

1. *L'Esprit des Autres, recueilli et raconté* par Édouard Fournier. Troisième édition. Paris, 1857.
2. *L'Esprit dans l'Histoire. Recherches et Curiosités sur les Mots historiques.* Par Édouard Fournier. Deuxième édition, revue et considérablement augmentée. Paris, 1860.

MANY years before 'aerated bread' was heard of, a company was formed at Pimlico for utilising the moisture which evaporates in the process of baking, by distilling spirit from it instead of letting it go to waste. Adroitly availing himself of the popular suspicion that the company's loaves must be unduly deprived of alcohol, a ready-witted baker put up a placard inscribed '*Bread with the Gin in it,*' and customers rushed to him in crowds. We strongly suspect that any over-scrupulous writer who should present history without its pleasant illusions, would find himself in the condition of the projectors who foolishly expected an enlightened public to dispense (as they thought) with an intoxicating ingredient in their bread.

'Pol, me occidistis, amici!  
Non servastis, ait, cui sic extorta voluptas,  
Et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error.'

---

<sup>1</sup> *Horace.* Epistles Lib. 2, Ep. 2, thus translated by Francis:—  
'My friends, 'twere better you had stopped my breath;  
Your love was rancour, and your cure was death;  
To rob me thus of pleasure so refined,  
The dear delusion of a raptur'd mind.'

'A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt that if there were taken from men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?' So says Lord Bacon; and few aphorisms in prose or verse are more popular than Gray's 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.' The poet may have been true to his vocation when he rhymed, rather than reasoned, in this fashion; but the philosopher would have been lamentably untrue to *his*, had he seriously propounded a doctrine which any looseness of interpretation could convert or pervert into an argument against truth, knowledge, or intelligence. Fortunately, the context shows that he was speaking of what is, not what ought to be; and was no more prepared to contend that credulity and falsehood are legitimate or lasting sources of mental gratification, than that the largest amount of physical enjoyment may be ensured by drunkenness. After speculating a little on the prevalent fondness for delusion, he concludes: 'Yet howsoever these things are in men's depraved judgments and affections, yet Truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature.'

This last emphatic sentence should be kept constantly in mind during the perusal of the books named at the head of this article. The object of the first, 'L'Esprit des Autres,' is the unsparing exposure of literary plagiarism in France. In the second, 'L'Esprit dans l'Histoire,' the learned and ingenious author gallantly undertakes to investigate the title of the leading characters in French history to the wisest and wittiest sayings, and some of the noblest doings, recorded of

them. Kings, generals, and statesmen are all thrown into the crucible, and in many instances we are unable to say of them (what Dryden said of Shakespeare) that, burn him down as you would, there would always be precious metal at the bottom of the melting-pot. Not a few subside into a mere *caput mortuum*, or emerge 'poor shrunken things,' with no future hold on posterity beyond what long-indulged error may maintain for them. On the other hand, the value of the genuine gem is ineffably enhanced by the detection of the counterfeit; and there is more room to walk about and admire the real heroes and heroines in the Pantheon or Walhalla when the pretenders are turned out.

At the same time, we cannot help wondering at the favour with which M. Fournier's disclosures have been received by his countrymen; and we might be disposed to admire rather than emulate his courage, if analogous results were likely to ensue from an equally rigid examination of the recorded or traditional claims of Englishmen. But, in the first place, there is good reason to believe that he carries scepticism to an undue extent, and insists on an amount of proof which, by the nature of things, is commonly unattainable. In the second place, our English habit of fully and freely canvassing assumed or asserted merit at its rise, and of immolating instead of pampering our national vanity, if (as in the case of the Crimean War) occasionally detrimental to our credit and influence abroad, carries at least one compensation with it:—We have little cause to tremble lest our long-established idols should be thrown down.

We propose, therefore, besides profiting by M. Fournier's discoveries, to extend our researches to general history and biography, ancient and modern. Most especially let us see whether the Plantagenets, Tudors, and Stuarts owe as much to borrowed plumes as the Capets and Bourbons: whether the stirring and pithy

sentences of Wolfe and Nelson are as much a myth as those of Desaix and Cambronne: whether our English worthies, civil and military, have been portrayed with the same exclusive reference to artistic effect, and the same noble independence of strict accuracy, as the French.

Before setting to work in right earnest on his more limited task, M. Fournier throws out a strong intimation, that he could shatter the foundations of many a fair structure of Greek and Roman heroism if he thought fit. Nor would it be altogether safe for the worshippers of classical antiquity to defy him to the proof.

'The intelligible forms of ancient poets,  
The fair humanities of old religion,  
The power, the beauty, and the majesty  
That had their haunts in dale or piny mountain,  
Or forest, by slow stream or pebbly spring,  
Or chasms and watery depths,—all these have vanished;  
They live no longer in the faith of reason.' <sup>1</sup>

Most of the associated traditions have necessarily vanished with them, or cut a sorry figure without their mythological costume. What are Romulus and Remus without their descent from Mars and their wet-nurse of a wolf? or what is Numa without Egeria? If one part of a story is palpably and confessedly fiction, can the rest be admitted without hesitation to be fact? Until nearly the middle of the eighteenth century, the earlier portions of Greek and Roman history were as implicitly believed as the later, and, from their exciting character, naturally sank deeper into the popular mind. In ignorance or forgetfulness of occasional hints thrown out by riper scholars, writers like Echard, Vertot, Rollin, Hooke, and Goldsmith, persevered in copying and amplifying the narratives of Herodotus, Livy, and Plutarch, as confidently as those of Thucydides, Cæsar, and Tacitus.

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge's translation of *Wallenstein*. These seven lines are a beautiful amplification of two:

Die alten Fabelwesen sind nicht mehr;  
Das reizende Geschlecht ist ausgewandert,

The spell was not effectually broken till Niebuhr (improving on MM. de Pouilly and De Beaufort) undertook to show, principally from internal evidence, that nearly the whole of the received history of Rome for the first four or five hundred years was apocryphal. An able review of the ensuing controversy will be found in the introduction to 'An Inquiry into the Credibility of the Early Roman History,' by Sir G. C. Lewis, who objects to Niebuhr's method, and insists that external proof or testimony is the only trustworthy source or test.

'Historical evidence,' he says, 'like judicial evidence, is founded on the testimony of credible witnesses. Unless these witnesses had personal and immediate perception of the facts which they report, unless they saw and heard what they undertake to relate as having happened, their evidence is not entitled to credit. As all original witnesses must be contemporary with the events which they attest, it is a necessary condition for the credibility of a witness that he be a contemporary, though a contemporary is not necessarily a credible witness. Unless, therefore, a historical account can be traced, by probable proof, to the testimony of contemporaries, the first condition of historical credibility fails.'

No historical account of Rome or the Romans for more than 400 years after the foundation of the city fulfils this condition; and the first book of Livy, containing the regal period, can lay claim (when thus tested) to no higher authority than Lord Macaulay's 'Lays.' Livy states that whatever records existed prior to the burning of Rome by the Gauls (365 years after its foundation) were then burnt or lost. We are left, therefore, in the most embarrassing uncertainty whether Tarquin outraged Lucretia; or Brutus shamed idiotcy and condemned his sons to death; or Mutius Scaevola thrust his hand into the fire; or Curtius jumped into the gulf (if there was one); or Cloelia swam the Tiber; or Cocles defended a bridge against

an army; or Brennus flung his sword into the scale. Livy confesses his inability to fix the respective nationality of the Horatii and Curiatii; and Sir George Lewis presses the absurdity of supposing that Coriolanus acted a twentieth part of the melodramatic scenes assigned to him; as, for example, that, with Tullus Aufidius at his side, he was permitted, at his mother's intercession, to lead back the Volscians thirsting for revenge.

Herodotus has fared even worse than Livy at the hands of some modern critics (although, by the way, the tenor of recent discoveries has been much in his favour); and Mr. Gladstone's argument for converting Homer into a veridical historian on the strength of the minuteness of his descriptions and details, would serve equally well to prove that Robinson Crusoe actually inhabited his island, or that Gulliver was really wrecked at Lilliput.

'But over and above the episodes which seem to owe their place in the poem to the historic aim, there are a multitude of minor shadings, which, as Homer could have derived no advantage from feigning them, we are compelled to suppose real. They are the parts of the graceful finish of a true story, *but they have not the showy character of what has been invented for effect.* Why, for instance, should Homer say of Clytemnestra that, till corrupted by Ægisthus, she was good. Why should it be worth his while to pretend that the iron ball, offered by Achilles for a prize, was the one formerly pitched by Ætioneus? Why should he occupy eight lines in describing the dry trench round which the chariots were to drive? Why should he tell us that Tydeus was of small stature? Why does Menelaus drive a mare? Why has Penelope a sister Iphthime, who was wedded to Eumetis, wanted for no other purpose than as a *persona* for Minerva in a dream? These questions, everyone will admit might be indefinitely multiplied.'

The parallel questions might be multiplied as fast.

<sup>1</sup> *Studies on Homer, &c.*, vol. i. p. 28.



Why does Robinson Crusoe tell us that he was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, and had two elder brothers, 'one of which was lieutenant-colonel to an English regiment of foot in Flanders, formerly commanded by the famous Colonel Lochhart'? Why does Joseph Andrews, in the battle with the hounds, grasp a cudgel, 'which his father had of his grandfather, to whom a mighty strong man of Kent had given it for a present on that day when he broke three heads on the stage. It was a cudgel of mighty strength, made by one of Mr. Deard's best workmen, whom no other master can equal'? Why does Gulliver relate that he was the third of five sons; that he was bound apprentice to Mr. James Bates, an eminent surgeon of London; that, when he set up on his own account, he took part of a small house in the Old Jewry; then removed to Fetter Lane, and afterwards to Wapping, 'hoping to get business among the sailors?' Why does Hotspur ride 'a roan, a cropear, is it not?'

The reason, obvious enough, is given in a sentence from Dunlop's 'History of Fiction,' quoted by Scott: 'Those minute references immediately lead us to give credit to the whole narrative, since we think they would hardly have been mentioned unless they were true.' *Ars est celare artem.* The effect would fail if they *had* a showy character, as if invented for effect. Homer's employment of such details simply proves that he was a master of his art, and it is one of his highest triumphs to have produced on the distinguished statesman and scholar an effect analogous to that which Swift produced on the rude sailor, who declared that he knew Captain Gulliver very well, but that he lived at Queenhithe, not at Wapping.

We can fully sympathise with this learned and accomplished critic in his eagerness to rehabilitate Helen, socially and morally, by showing in what high esteem she was held by Priam; but unless she was

superior to all female weakness, there was a matter which occasioned her more anxiety than her character. Sir Robert Walpole used to say that he never despaired of restoring a woman's placability, unless she had been called old or ugly. Now the age of this respected matron has been discussed with more learning than gallantry; and the prevalent opinion of erudite Germany seems to be that she was past sixty when Homer brings her upon the stage.

We could fill pages with the sceptical doubts of scholiasts, who would fain deprive Diogenes of his lantern and his tub, Æsop of his hump, Sappho of her leap, Rhodes of its Colossus, and Dionysius the First of his ear; nay, who pretend that Cadmus did not come from Phœnicia, that Belisarius was not blind, that Portia did not and could not swallow burning coals, and that Dionysius the Second never kept a school at Corinth. Others, without incurring any suspicion of paradox, have exposed the monstrous exaggerations of the Greeks in their accounts of the invasion of Xerxes, whose host is computed by Lemprière (that unerring guide of the ingenuous youth of both sexes) at 5,283,220 souls. 'This multitude, *which the fidelity of historians has not exaggerated*, was stopped at Thermopylæ by 300 Spartans under King Leonidas.'<sup>1</sup> The Persian commissariat must have been much better regulated than the French or English before Sebastopol, if half a million of fighting men were ever brought within fifty miles of Thermopylæ. Still there may have been enough to give occasion for the remark of the Spartan, that, if the Persian arrows flew so thick as to intercept the sun, they should fight in the shade: enough also to elicit the touching reflection of Xerxes

<sup>1</sup> Lemprière's 'Classical Dictionary.' Last Edition. Title *Xerxes*. 'To admit this overwhelming total, or anything near to it, is obviously impossible.'—*Grote*, vol. v. p. 46. Mr. Grote accepts the tradition of the 300 Spartans, whom respectable authors have computed at 7,000, and even at 12,000.

as he gazed upon the assembled host; if, indeed, this should not be rejected as out of keeping with the mad pranks he played on the first occurrence of a check.

This is one of the instances in which, with deference to Sir George Lewis, internal evidence is superior to external. Herodotus was four years old when the Persian invasion commenced: he was only thirty-nine when he recited his History at the Olympic Games. He must have conversed with many who had been personally engaged in the war; he was truthful, if superstitious and credulous; and contemporary testimony might doubtless have been procured, that, to the best of the deponents' belief, the Persian army drank up rivers on their march. Internal probability or improbability must also be allowed considerable weight, when we have to deal with the records of a later age. Modern chemists have been unable to discover how Hannibal could have pierced rocks, or Cleopatra dissolved pearls, with vinegar. Napoleon, at St. Helena, occasionally read and commented on the alleged traits of ancient valour and virtue:—

‘He strongly censured what he called historical sillinesses (*niaiserie*), ridiculously exalted by the translators and commentators. These betrayed from the beginning, he said, historians who judged ill of men and their position. It was wrong, for example, to make so much of the continence of Scipio, or to expatiate on the calmness of Alexander, Cæsar, and others, for having slept on the eve of a battle. None but a monk excluded from women, whose face glows at their approach, could make it a great merit in Scipio not to have outraged one whom chance placed in his power. As to sleeping immediately before a battle, there are none of our soldiers, of our generals, who have not repeated this marvel twenty times; and nearly all their heroism lay in the foregoing fatigue.’

Napoleon might have referred to Aulus Gellius, who, after a mocking allusion to the continence of

## 10 THE PEARLS AND MOCK PEARLS OF HISTORY.

Scipio and a similar instance of self-restraint practised by Alexander towards the wife and sister of Darius, adds :—

‘It said of this Scipio, I know not whether truly or otherwise, but it is related that when a young man he was not immaculate; and it is *nearly* certain (*propemodum* constitisse) that these verses were written by Cn. Nævius, the poet, against him :—

‘Etiam qui res magnas manu saepe gessit gloriose ;  
Cujus facta viva nunc vigent ; qui apud gentes solus  
Præstat ; eum suus pater cum pallio uno ab amica abduxit.’

I believe that these verses induced Valerius Antias to express himself concerning the morality of Scipio in contradiction to all other writers, and to say that this captive maid was not restored to her father.<sup>1</sup>

It is hard on Scipio to be deprived of his prescriptive reputation for continence on no better testimony than this. But ‘be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.’ A German pedant has actually ventured to question the purity of Lucretia. By way of set-off, Messalina has been brought upon the French stage as the innocent victim of calumny. A Roman courtesan, so runs the plot, so closely resembled her as to impose upon the most charitable of her contemporaries, and make them believe that she was engaged in a succession of orgies, whilst she was spinning with her maids. She is killed just as the terrible truth dawns upon her, without being allowed time to clear herself. The combined part of the courtesan and the empress was one of Rachel’s masterpieces.

It has been thought odd that so wise a king as Philip should have exclaimed, on witnessing Alexander’s Rarey-like adroitness in taming Bucephalus, ‘Seek another kingdom, my son, for Macedon is too small for thee ;’ and Cæsar’s exhortation to the pilot,

<sup>1</sup> ‘The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius,’ B. vi. c. 8 (translated by Beloe), vol. ii. p. 23.

*Cæsarem vehis* ('Thou carriest Cæsar and his fortunes'), has been discredited by Napoleon and others<sup>1</sup> on the ground that the incident is not mentioned in the 'Commentaries.' Neither is the voyage during which it is supposed to have happened, which was an ill-advised and unsuccessful attempt to reach Brundisium by sea. Although the pilot recovered his presence of mind sufficiently to mind the helm, the vessel was obliged to put back, and the entire adventure was one which Cæsar had little cause to remember with complacency. He is equally silent as to another rash expedition, in which he ran imminent risk of being taken prisoner by the Gauls. If his mere silence is decisive, we must also reject the story of his crossing the Rubicon, told with striking and minute details by both Plutarch and Suetonius. According to Suetonius, his words were: 'Let us go where the divine portents and the iniquity of enemies call. Let the die be cast.' According to Plutarch, he cried out: 'The die is cast,' and immediately crossed the river.

The most remarkable incident of his death is one of the most puzzling instances of popular faith which we are acquainted with. How, and when, came the *Et tu, Brute*, to be substituted for the more touching reproach set down for him by the only writers of authority who pretend to give his precise words? According to Plutarch, Casca having struck the first blow, Cæsar turned upon him and laid hold of his sword. 'At the same time they both cried out—the one in Latin, "Villain Casca, what dost thou mean?" and the other in Greek to his brother, "Brother, help!"' Some say

<sup>1</sup> 'In reading, Napoleon leant to scepticism and paradox; as, for instance, he ridiculed as improbable the story of Cæsar's escape in the boat, and his speech to the boatman, and was much inclined to disparage the talents, and more particularly the military skill, of that extraordinary man.'—Lord Holland's *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 295. The Duke of Wellington always professed the highest admiration for Cæsar's military talents.

he opposed the rest, and continued struggling and crying out, till he perceived the sword of Brutus; then he drew his robe over his face, and yielded to his fate.'<sup>1</sup> Nicolas Damascenus mentions no one as speaking except Casca, who, he says, 'calls to his brother in Greek, on account of the tumult.'<sup>2</sup> The statement of Suetonius, is, that Cæsar was pierced with twenty-three wounds, without uttering a sound beyond one groan at the first blow; 'although some have handed down, that, to Marcus Brutus, rushing on, he said *Καὶ σὺ, τέκν υ'.*' In some editions of Suetonius, the words *καὶ σὺ εἰ (or εἰς) ἐκείνων* are added, which would make 'And you, my son, and you are one of them.' Dr. Merivale, who, in the text of his valuable work, 'The Romans under the Empire,' adopts the current story, says in a note, 'Of course no reliance can be placed on such minute details. The whole statement of the effect of the sight of Brutus upon Cæsar may be a fiction suggested by the vulgar story of the relation between them.' The 'vulgar story,' that Brutus was his son, derives some confirmation from Suetonius, who, after naming several Roman ladies with whom Cæsar had intrigued, adds: 'Sed ante alias dilexit M. Bruti matrem, Serviliam.' ('But before others he loved the mother of Marcus Brutus, Servilia.')

It was the adoption of the Latin words by Shakespeare that made them popular and familiar. 'His authority,' says Malone, 'appears to have been a line in the old play, entitled 'The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of York,' &c., printed in 1600, on which is formed his third part of Henry VI. :—

*'Et tu Brute? Will't thou stab Cæsar too?'*

The history of modern Europe is susceptible of the same three-fold division as that of Greece and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's 'Life of Cæsar.' In the 'Life of Brutus,' nothing is said of the effect of Brutus's appearance.

<sup>2</sup> 'Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum,' vol. iii. p. 445.

It comprises the fabulous, the semi-fabulous, and the historic, period. We regret to say that Arthur and his Round Table belong to the first: so indisputably belong to it, that archæologists are still disputing whether the bevy of knights and dames, on whom poetic genius has recently shed fresh lustre, are the creation of French Britany, or the veritable progeny of the ancient Britons, whose Welsh descendants claim them as the brightest ornaments of their race.<sup>1</sup> Charlemagne belongs to the second period, and, as regards him and his court, it is astounding what a superstructure of fiction has been erected on the slenderest basis of fact. Thus Milton:—

When Charlemagne with all his peerage fell,  
By Fontarabia:

or the lines given to Francis Osbaldiston in 'Rob Roy':—

O for the voice of that wild horn  
On Fontarabian echoes borne,  
The dying hero's call,  
That told imperial Charlemagne,  
How Paynim sons of swarthy Spain  
Had wrought his champion's fall.

His champion, we need hardly say, was Roland, the Orlando of Boyardo and Ariosto, who, besides a horn which was heard at an incredible distance, has been invested by poetry or tradition with a sword, bright Durandal, with which he clove a pass through the Pyrenees, still called 'la brèche de Roland,' although he could not cleave a path through his foes. Then, again, Mat Lewis:—

Sad and fearful is the story  
Of the Roncesvalles fight;  
On that fatal field of glory  
Perished many a gallant knight.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Wright's edition of 'La Mort d'Arthur,' in three volumes. London, 1858. As to the worthlessness of the earliest histories of Arthur and Charlemagne, on which the later are mainly based, see Buckle's *History*, 292, 297, and vol. ii. p. 484.

'That field of glory' was a defile in which the rear-guard of Charlemagne's army was cut off and put to the sword by an irregular force of Spanish Basques or (some say) a marauding party of Gascons led by their duke, Lupo; 'in which conflict,' says Eginhard, 'there fell, with many others, Anselm, Count of the Palace, and Roland, Prefect of the Marches of Brittany.' We have the high authority of M. Teulet, the learned editor of Eginhard's works, for adding that 'this passage is the only one in which any mention is made of the famous Roland, who plays so great a part in all the Carlovingian romances.'

Earl Stanhope, who has brought together all the available information in his 'Legends of Charlemagne,' fairly gives up the twelve Paladins or Peers; declaring that the idea is quite imaginary, and appears to take its rise from the supposition that every man of might ought to be attended by certain followers of commensurate renown; the number twelve having, probably, been suggested by the Gospel History. But he has a weakness for the champion of Roncesvalles; and after recapitulating the gifts or qualities with which fable has endowed him—including the horn, the sword, and a beautiful bride, Lady Alda—continues:—

'As it appears to me, there is here a striking similarity between the Roland of France and the William Wallace of Scotland. The exploits of both are unrecorded in the meagre chronicles of the times. These exploits live only in tradition and in song. *But, taken as a whole, they have, in my judgment, a just claim to be believed. All that tradition has done is to confound the dates and exaggerate the circumstances.* We may be sure that so great and so general a fame could not in either case have arisen, had not the living hero impressed his image on the public mind. I should therefore entirely agree with Sismondi, who, in the second volume of the history of France, contends that, although Roland may not have been pre-eminent at Ronces-



valles, he must have performed achievements and acquired renown in former years, when warring against the Saracens.<sup>1</sup>

Probably enough; but how does this establish a striking similarity between the Roland of France, of whom absolutely nothing is recorded or ascertained but that he was slain in a mountain pass, and the champion of Scotland, whose life and career are so indissolubly blended with the history of his country that they cannot be discredited without cancelling many of its brightest pages. If Wallace is to be deemed mythical, because his personal prowess has been exaggerated by tradition, why not Robert Bruce? Their exploits rest on identically the same description of authority; and if the historical evidence of the thirteenth or fourteenth century is not fuller or more trustworthy than that of the eighth, it follows that Cambuskenneth, Falkirk, and Bannockburn, are no better known than Roncesvalles. To descend to domestic matters, can it be contended that Wallace's wife, Marion, is as apocryphal as the Lady Alda of Roland?

People well acquainted with Ireland contend that Sir Jonah Barrington has conveyed a correct impression of his countrymen on the whole; that all he has done is (like tradition) to confound the dates and exaggerate the circumstances. This application of Earl Stanhope's argument is plausible enough, for Sir Jonah's stories are within the range of possibility; but the exploits of Roland are not; and, whether taken individually or as a whole, have no better claim to belief than those of Lancelot or Amadis. We differ from Lord Stanhope with deference and regret; but, if we admitted the soundness of his reasoning in this instance,

<sup>1</sup> *Miscellanies: Second Series.* The paper originally appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* for July, 1866.

a large proportion of the judgments which we have hazarded in the following pages must be reversed.

So prodigious an amount of learning and acuteness, German and English, has been brought to bear on Anglo-Saxon history, that no excuse is left for illusion, however pleasant. Dr. Reinhold Pauli has carefully examined the authorities for the popular stories of Alfred the Great, and reluctantly admits that they are far from satisfactory. We are not prepared to give up the story of the burnt cakes because it is not to be found in the extant fragments of his life by his friend Asser, but our faith is somewhat shaken in that of his venturing into the Danish camp in the disguise of a minstrel, when we learn that it is not told of him by any of the old Saxon writers, that it is told of another Saxon monarch, and that it breathes more of the Scandinavian-Norman than of the Saxon spirit.<sup>1</sup>

The Chancellor Lord Eldon, who took his bachelor's degree in 1770, used to say, 'An examination for a degree at Oxford was a farce in my time. I was examined in Hebrew and in history:—"What is the Hebrew for the place of a skull?" I replied, "Golgotha." "Who founded University College?" I stated (though, by the way, the point is sometimes doubted) that King Alfred founded it. "Very well, sir," said the examiner, "you are competent for your degree."' If Alfred founded the oldest college, he, in one sense, founded the University; but the sole authority for the hypothesis is a passage in Asser, which is no longer to be found.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'König Aelfred und seine Stelle in der Geschichte Englands; von Dr. Reinhold Pauli.' Berlin, 1851, pp. 130-132.

<sup>2</sup> See Gough's edition of 'Camden's Britannia,' fol. 1799, p. 299, and 'Thorpe's Translation of Lappenberg's History,' Preface, p. 38. Mr. Hallam says, in his Introduction to the 'Literature of Europe,' vol. i. p. 16 (8th edit.), 'In a former work I gave more credence to its (the college's) foundation by Alfred than I am now inclined to do.'

We are gravely told, on historical authority, by Moore, in a note to one of his 'Irish Melodies'—

'Rich and rare were the gems she wore ;'

that during the reign of Brian, king of Munster, a young lady of great beauty, richly dressed, and adorned with jewels, undertook a journey from one end of the kingdom to another, with a wand in her hand, at the top of which was a ring of exceeding great value; and such was the perfection of the laws and the government that no attempt was made upon her honour, nor was she robbed of her clothes and jewels. Precisely the same story is told in honour of Alfred, of Frothi, king of Denmark, and of Rollo, duke of Normandy.

Another romantic anecdote, fluctuating between two or more sets of actors, is an episode in the amours of Emma, the alleged daughter of Charlemagne, who, finding that the snow had fallen thick during a nightly interview with her lover, Eginhard, took him upon her shoulders, and carried him to some distance from her bower, to prevent his footsteps from being traced. Unluckily, Charlemagne had no daughter named Emma or Imma; and a hundred years before the appearance (in 1600) of the 'Chronicle' which records the adventure, it had been related in print of a German emperor and a damsel unknown. Let us hope, for the honour of the fair sex, that it is true of somebody. Fielding, after recording an instance in which Joseph Andrews' muscular powers enable him to insure the safety of Fanny, exclaims—'Learn hence, my fair countrywomen, to consider your own weakness, and the many occasions on which the strength of a man may be useful to you;' and he exhorts them not to match themselves with spindle-shanked beaux and *petits-maitres*. Could we put faith in Emma's exploit, it might justify an ex-

hortation to the male sex to give the preference to ladies strong enough to carry a husband or lover, on an emergency ; especially when we remember the story of the women of Weinberg, who, when that fortress was about to be stormed, obtained permission to come out carrying with them whatever they deemed most valuable, and surprised the besiegers by issuing from the gate each carrying her husband on her back.

The story of Canute commanding the waves to roll back rests on the authority of Henry of Huntingdon, who wrote about a hundred years after the death of the Danish monarch. Hume treats the popular legend of Fair Rosamond as fabulous. According to Lingard, instead of being poisoned by Queen Eleanor, she retired to the convent of Godstow, and, dying in the odour of sanctity, was buried with such marks of veneration by the nuns as to provoke a rebuke from their diocesan, who reminded them that 'religion makes no distinction between the mistress of a king and the mistress of any other man.'

Blondel, harp in hand, discovering his master's place of confinement, is clearly a fancy-picture ; for the seizure and imprisonment of Richard were matters of European notoriety. What is alleged to have befallen him on his way home has found its appropriate place in 'Ivanhoe ;' and the adventures of monarchs in disguise, from Haroun Alraschid downwards, so frequently resemble each other that we are compelled to suspect a common origin for the majority. Tradition has distinctly fixed the locality of the ballad, 'King James and the Tinker,' pronouncing 'The Royal Blackbirds' to be the scene of the carousal, and New Lodge, Windsor Forest, the place where the tinker was knighted. But an almost identical adventure is ascribed to Henry IV. of France.

The statement of a Welsh writer of the sixteenth century, that Edward the First gathered together all

the Welsh bards, and had them put to death, is implicitly adopted by Hume, and made familiar by Gray :—

‘Ruin seize thee, ruthless king ;  
Confusion on thy banners wait.’

It is glaringly improbable and rests on no valid testimony of any sort.

Miss Aikin was, we believe, the first to demolish the credibility of the celebrated story, that Cromwell, Hampden, and Arthur Hazelrig, despairing of the liberties of their country, had actually embarked for New England (in 1638), when they were stopped by an Order in Council. The incident is not mentioned by the best authorities, including Clarendon ; and there is no direct proof that either of the three belonged to the expedition, which, after a brief delay, was permitted to proceed with its entire freight of Pilgrims.

‘As for the greater number of the stories with which the *ana* are stuffed,’ says Voltaire, ‘including all those humorous replies attributed to Charles the Fifth, to Henry the Fourth, to a hundred modern princes, you find them in Athenæus and in our old authors. It is in this sense only that one may say “nothing new under the sun.”’<sup>1</sup> He does not stop to give examples, but there is no difficulty in finding them. Thus the current story is, or was, that Baudesson, mayor of St. Dizier, was so like Henry the Fourth that the royal guards saluted him as he passed. ‘Why, friend,’ said Henry, ‘your mother must have visited Bearn ?’ ‘No,’ replied the mayor, ‘it was my father who occasionally resided there.’ This story, which is also told of Louis the Fourteenth, is related by Macrobius of Augustus.

Dionysius the tyrant, we are told by Diogenes of Laerte, treated his friends like vases full of good liquors, which he broke when he had emptied them. This is

<sup>1</sup> ‘A. M. du M . . . , Membre de Plusieurs Académies, sur Plusieurs Anecdotes.’ (1774).—*Voltaire's Works*.

precisely what Cardinal Retz says of Madame de Chevreuse's treatment of her lovers.

The epigrammatic remark given by H. Say to Christina of Sweden, on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis the Fourteenth, 'He has cut off his left arm with the right,' belongs to Valentinian. That of the peasant to the same monarch, 'It is useless to enlarge your park at Versailles; you will always have neighbours,' is copied from Apuleius, and has been placed in the mouth of a Norfolk labourer in reference to the lordly domain of Holkham. Henry the Fourth, when put on his guard against assassination, is reported to have said, 'He who fears death will undertake nothing against me; he who despises his own life will always be master of mine.' This recalls Seneca's '*Contemptor suæmet vitæ, dominus alienæ.*'

Fabricius, in conference with Pyrrhus, was tempted to revolt to him, Pyrrhus telling him that he should be partner of his fortunes, and second person to him. But Fabricius answered in scorn to such a motion, 'Ah! that would not be good for yourself, for if the Epirotes once knew me, they will rather desire to be governed by me than by you.'<sup>1</sup> Charles the Second told his brother, afterwards James the Second, who was expressing fears for his safety, 'Depend upon it, James, no one will kill me to make you king.'

There is a story of Sully's meeting a young lady, veiled and dressed in green, on the back stairs leading to Henry's apartment, and being asked by the king whether he had not been told that his Majesty had a fever and could not receive that morning, 'Yes; sire, but the fever is gone; I have just met it on the staircase dressed in green.' A similar story is told of Demetrius and his father.

The Emperor Adrian, meeting a personal enemy the day after his accession to the throne, exclaimed,

<sup>1</sup> Bacon's 'Apothegms.'

'*Evasisti*' ('thou hast escaped'). Philip, Count of Bresse, becoming Duke of Savoy, said, 'It would be shameful in the Duke to revenge the injuries done to the Count.' Third in point of time is the better-known saying of Louis the Twelfth, 'The King of France does not revenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans.' Instead of being uttered in this laconic form to the Duc de la Trémouille, it formed the conclusion of an address to the deputies of the city of Orleans, who were told 'that it would not be decent or honourable in a King of France to revenge the quarrels of a Duke of Orleans.'

The three last are amongst the examples adduced by M. Suard<sup>1</sup> in support of his theory, very different from Voltaire's, respecting the causes of the similarity between striking sayings and doings, which, he contends, is too frequently accepted as a proof of plagiarism in the later speaker or actor, or as affording a presumption of pure fiction. We agree with M. Suard; and an apt analogy is supplied by the history of invention. The honour of almost every important discovery, from the printing press to the electric telegraph, has been vehemently contested by rival claimants; and the obvious reason is, that, whenever the attention of the scientific world has been long and earnestly fixed upon a subject, it is as if so many heaps of combustible materials had been accumulated, or so many trains laid, any two or three of which may be simultaneously exploded by a spark. The results resemble each other, because each projector is influenced by the same laws of progress; and as the human heart and mind retain their essential features, unaltered by time or space, there is nothing surprising in the fact of two or more persons,

<sup>1</sup> '*Notes sur l'Esprit d'Imitation*,' published after his death, with additions by M. Le Clerc, in the '*Revue française*,' Nouvelle Série, tom. vi. On the subject of coincidences in fact and fiction, see also Keightley's '*Tales and Popular Fictions*,' chap. i.; and the Preface to his '*Fairy Mythology*.'

similarly situated, acting on similar impulses or hitting on similar relations of ideas.

This theory, which we believe to be true in the main, has one great recommendation. It is productive, not destructive. It doubles or trebles the accumulated stock of originality; and whenever we light upon a fresh coincidence in nobility of feeling, depth of reflection, readiness or terseness of expression, we may exclaim, 'Behold a fresh instance of a quality that does honour to mankind.' We have collected some striking specimens in addition to those already mentioned; and if many of them, individually taken, are familiar enough, their juxtaposition may prove new. Sydney Smith says of Mackintosh, 'The great thoughts and fine sayings of the great men of all ages were intimately present to his recollection, and came out, dazzling and delighting, in his conversation.' We may at least assist in purifying and utilising, if we do not greatly augment, the store of these invaluable elements of entertainment and instruction.

The right wing of Hyder Ali's army, in an action against the English under Colonel Baillie, was commanded by his son, and intelligence arrived that it was beginning to give way. 'Let Tippoo Saib do his best,' said Hyder; 'he has his reputation to make.' This closely resembles the reply of Edward the Third when exhorted to succour the Black Prince at Crecy.

Commodore Billings, in his account of his Expedition to the Northern Coasts of Russia, says that when he and Mr. Main were on the river Kobima, they were attended by a young man from Kanoga, an island between Kamschatka and North America. One day Mr. Main asked him, 'What will the savages do to me if I fall into their power?' 'Sir,' said the youth, 'you will never fall into their power if I remain with you. I always carry a sharp knife; and if I see you pursued and unable to escape, I will plunge my knife into your



heart ; then the savages can do nothing more to you.' These recall the words of the French knight reported by Joinville : 'Swear to me,' said Queen Margaret, 'that if the Saracens become masters of Damietta, you will cut off my head before they can take me.' 'Willingly,' replied the knight ; 'I had already thought of doing so if the contingency arrived.'

Florus, describing the battle in which Catiline fell, says, '*Nemo hostium bello superfuît.*' The day after the battle of Rocroy, a French officer asked a Spaniard what were the numbers of their veteran infantry before the battle. 'You have only,' replied he, 'to count the dead and the prisoners.'<sup>1</sup> A Russian officer being asked the number of the troops to which he had been opposed, pointed to the field of death, and said, 'You may count them ; they are all there.'

The *veni, vidi, vici*, of Cæsar has given rise to an infinity of imitators. John Sobieski, after relieving Vienna in 1683, announced his victory over the Turks to the Pope in these words : '*Je suis venu, j'ai vu, Dieu a vaincu.*'—'I came ; I saw ; God conquered.' Cardinal Richelieu acknowledged the receipt of a Latin work dedicated to him thus : '*Accepi, legi, probavi*' (I have received, read, approved).

When Cæsar slipped and fell, on landing in Africa, he is reported to have exclaimed : 'Land of Africa, I take possession of thee.' Thierry, in his 'History of the Norman Conquest,' says :—

'The Duke (the Conqueror) landed the last of all ; the moment his foot touched the sand, he made a false step, and fell on his face. A murmur arose, and voices cried, "Heaven preserve us ! a bad sign." But William, rising, said directly, "What is the matter ? What are you wondering at ? I have seized this ground with my hands, and by the brightness of God, so far as it extends, it is mine, it is yours."''

<sup>1</sup> 'The Life of Condé.' By Lord Mahon (Earl Stanhope), p. 22.

Froissart relates that Edward the Third fell with such violence on the sea-shore at La Hogue that the blood gushed from his nose, and a cry of consternation was raised, but the king answered quickly and said, 'This is a good token for me, for the land desireth to have me,' of which answer his men were right joyful.

When Mirabeau exclaimed, 'I know how near the Tarpeian Rock is to the Capitol,' he may have been thinking of Pope Alexander the Sixth's words, 'Vide, mi fili, quam leve discrimen patibulum inter et statuum.' But no parallel has been found for Chancellor Oxenstiern's famous remark to his son, although the reflection, a constantly recurring one, is precisely what we should have expected to find in some ancient cynic or satirist—'Go, my son, and see with how little wisdom the world is governed.'

The anecdote-mongers of antiquity relate of Pompey, that, when the danger of a meditated voyage (to bring provisions for Rome in a scarcity) was pressed upon him, he said, 'This voyage is necessary, and my life is not.' Maréchal Saxe, starting for the campaign of Fontenoy, at the risk of his life, said to Voltaire: '*Il ne s'agit pas de vivre, mais de partir.*' Voltaire put aside the remonstrances of his friends against his attending the rehearsal of 'Irène' with the remark: '*Il n'est pas question de vivre, mais de faire jouer ma tragédie.*' Racine had anticipated both Voltaire and the Maréchal by a line in Bérénice: '*Mais il ne s'agit plus de vivre, il faut regner.*'

Voltaire, speaking highly of Haller, was told that he was very generous in so doing, since Haller said just the contrary of him. 'Perhaps,' remarked Voltaire, after a short pause, 'we are both of us mistaken.' Libanius writes to Aristænetus: 'You are always speaking ill of me. I speak nothing but good of you. Do you not fear that neither of us shall be believed?'

Themistocles in his lower fortune leaned to a gentle-

man who scorned him ; when he grew to his greatness, which was soon after, he sought to him. Themistocles said : ' We are both grown wise, but too late.'<sup>1</sup> If all the good sayings attributed by Plutarch to Themistocles really belonged to him, they would suffice to place him amongst the wisest and wittiest men of antiquity. But Plutarch, like Voltaire, seldom resists the temptation of a good story ; and even the celebrated ' Strike, but hear ! ' is shaken by the fact that Herodotus, the earliest reporter now extant of the debate of the admirals, makes no mention of the saying, and represents Adeimantus, the Corinthian admiral, as the person with whom Themistocles had an altercation upon that occasion. Plutarch puts the Lacedæmonian admiral, Eurybiades, in the place of Adeimantus ; and adds the incident of the intended blow arrested by the words, ' Strike, but hear ! '<sup>2</sup>

The lesson of perseverance in adversity taught by the spider to Robert Bruce, is said to have been taught by the same insect to Tamerlane.

' When Columbus,' says Voltaire, ' promised a new hemisphere, people maintained that it could not exist ; and when he had discovered it, that it had been known a long time.' It was to confute such detractors that he resorted to the illustration of the egg, already employed by Brunelleschi when his merit in raising the cupola of the cathedral of Florence was contested.

The anecdote of Southampton reading ' The Faery Queen,' whilst Spencer was waiting in the ante-chamber, may pair off with one of Louis XIV. As this munificent monarch was going over the improvements of Versailles with Le Nôtre, the sight of each fresh beauty

<sup>1</sup> Bacon's ' Apothegms.'

<sup>2</sup> ' C'était un plaisant historien,' says Paul-Louis Courier, speaking of Plutarch. ' Il se moque des faits. . . . Il ferait gagner à Pompée la bataille de Pharsale, si cela pouvait arrondir tant soit peu sa phrase. Il a raison. Toutes ces sottises qu'on appelle histoire ne peuvent valoir quelque chose qu'avec les ornements du goût.'

or capability tempts him to some fresh extravagance ; till the architect cries out, that, if their promenade is continued in this fashion, it will end in the bankruptcy of the State. Southampton, after sending first twenty and then fifty guineas on coming to one fine passage after another, exclaims, 'Turn the fellow out of the house, or I shall be ruined.'

The following lines form part of the animated description of the battle of Bannockburn in the 'Lord of the Isles':—

"The Rebels, Argentine, repent !  
For pardon they have kneeled."  
"Ay, but they kneel to other powers,  
And other pardon ask than ours.  
See where yon barefoot abbot stands,  
And blesses them with lifted hands !  
Upon the spot where they have kneeled  
These men will die or win the field."

A note refers to Dalrymple's 'Annals,' which state that the abbot was Maurice, abbot of Inchaffray ; and the knight to whom the king's remark was addressed, Ingleram de Umfraville. The same mistake is attributed to Charles the Bold, before the battle of Granson, to the Duc de Joyeuse before the battle of Courtray, and to the Austrians at Frastenz.

In the scene of Henry VI., where Lord Say is dragged before Cade, we find :

'Dick. Why dost thou quiver, man ?  
Say. The palsy, and not fear, provoketh me.'

On the morning of his execution, Charles I. said to his groom of the chambers, 'Let me have a shirt on more than ordinary, by reason the season is so sharp as probably may make me shake, which some observers will imagine proceeds from fear. I would have no such imputation ; I fear not death.'<sup>1</sup> Stafford called for a

<sup>1</sup> 'Memoirs of the Two Last Years of the Reign of King Charles I.' By Sir Thomas Herbert, Groom of the Chambers to his Majesty. London, 1813.

cloak for the same reason. As Bailly was waiting to be guillotined, one of the executioners accused him of trembling. 'I am cold' (*J'ai froid*), was the reply.

Frederic the Great is reported to have said, in reference to a troublesome assailant, 'This man wants me to make a martyr of him, but he shall not have that satisfaction.' Vespasian told Demetrius the Cynic, 'You do all you can to get me to put you to death, but I do not kill a dog for barking at me.' This Demetrius was a man of real spirit and honesty. When Caligula tried to conciliate his good word by a large gift in money, he sent it back with the message: 'If you wish to bribe me, you must send me your crown.' George III. ironically asked an eminent divine, who was just returned from Rome, whether he had converted the Pope. 'No, sire, I had nothing better to offer him.'

Lord Macaulay relates of Clive, that 'twice, whilst residing in the Writers' Buildings at Madras, he attempted suicide, and twice the pistol which he snapped at his own head failed to go off. After satisfying himself that the pistol was really loaded, he burst out into an exclamation that "surely he was reserved for something great." Wallenstein's character underwent a complete change from the accident of his falling from a great height without hurting himself. Pascal's narrow escape at the bridge of Neuilly (1654) produced a complete revolution in his ideas, and gave a new direction to his views and conduct.

Cardinal Ximenes, upon a muster which was taken against the Moors, was spoken to by a servant of his to stand a little out of the smoke of the arquebuss, but he said again 'that was his incense.' The first time Charles XII. of Sweden was under fire, he inquired what the hissing he heard about his ears was, and being told it was caused by the musket-balls,

'Good,' he exclaimed, 'this henceforth shall be my music.'

Pope Julius II., like many a would-be connoisseur, was apt to exhibit his taste by fault-finding. On his objecting that one of Michel Angelo's statues might be improved by a few touches of the chisel, the artist, with the aid of a few pinches of marble dust, which he dropped adroitly, conveyed an impression that he had acted on the hint. When Halifax found fault with some passages in Pope's translation of Homer, the poet, by the advice of Garth, left them as they stood, told the peer at the next reading that they had been retouched, and had the satisfaction of finding him as easily satisfied as his Holiness. Louis XIV. adopted a safer method of supporting his character as a connoisseur. Having to decide between a copy and the original of a beautiful picture, he asked to be secretly informed beforehand on the subject: '*Il ne faut pas qu'un roi soit exposé à se tromper.*'

When Lycurgus was to reform and alter the state of Sparta, in the consultation one advised that it should be reduced to an absolute popular equality; but Lycurgus said to him, 'Sir, begin it in your own house.' Had Dr. Johnson forgotten this among Bacon's 'Apothegms' when he told Mrs. Macaulay, 'Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing, and to give you an unquestionable proof, Madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen, your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us' ?<sup>1</sup>

In allusion to Napoleon's shaving, Talleyrand observed to Rogers—'A king by birth is shaved by another. He who makes himself king shaves himself.' A prince by birth, the great Condé, was shaved by another, and

<sup>1</sup> Bacon's 'Apothegms.'

one day, when submitting to this operation, he remarked aloud to the operator—‘ You tremble.’ ‘ And you do not,’ was the retort. M. Suard supplies a curious parallel to this anecdote by one of an old and infirm *Milord Anglais*, who was going through the marriage ceremony with a young and lovely girl, and held her hand in his—‘ You tremble?’ ‘ Don’t *you*?’

The French ‘Ana’ assign to Maréchal Villiers, taking leave of Louis XIV., the familiar aphorism (founded on a Spanish proverb), ‘Defend me from my friends; I can defend myself against my enemies.’ Canning’s lines—

‘ But of all plagues, good Heav’n, thy wrath can send,  
Save, save, oh ! save me from the candid friend,’—

are a versified adaptation of it. Lord Melbourne, on being pressed to do something for a journalist, on the ground that he always supported his lordship when in the right, retorted—‘ That’s just when I don’t want his help. Give me a fellow who will stick by me when I am in the wrong.’

Louis XIV. is reported to have said to Boileau, on receiving his ‘Epistle’ on the passage of the Rhine—‘ This is fine, and I should praise you more had you praised me less.’ Unluckily, Queen Marguerite (La Reine Margot) had already paid the same compliment to Brantome; and the palm among courtly repartees must be given to Waller’s, on Charles II.’s asking him how it happened that his poetical panegyric on Cromwell was better than his verses on the Restoration—‘ Poets, your Majesty, succeed better in fiction than in truth.’

On Lord Thurlow’s exclaiming—‘ When I forget my king, may my God forget me,’ Wilkes muttered—‘ He’ll see you d——d first.’ Lord Russell states that Burke’s comment on the same occasion was—‘ And the best thing God can do for him.’ One of Bacon’s ‘apothegms’ is—‘ Bion was sailing, and there fell out

a great tempest, and the mariners, that were wicked and dissolute fellows, called upon the gods ; but Bion said to them—"Peace, let them not know you are here." "

Care must be taken to distinguish the cases, in which, from failure of collateral proof or internal evidence or from the character of the narrator, the repetition or re-appearance of the story raises a reasonable suspicion of its authenticity ; and it unluckily happens that quaint instances of ill-nature, absurdity, stupidity, or worse, are even more likely to be produced in duplicate or triplicate than heroic actions and generous impulses.

Mummius told the commissioners who were employed in carrying the plunder of Corinth, including many masterpieces of Grecian art, to Rome, that he should insist on their replacing any that were destroyed or injured. An Englishman, on hearing of Canova's death, asked the great sculptor's brother if he meant to carry on the business.

One of the petty tyrants of Italy, during the Middle Ages, was met on the middle of a bridge by the bearer of a sentence of excommunication. He asked the messenger whether he would eat or drink, and cut short his astonishment by explaining that the alternative thereby proposed was whether he would eat up the Papal bull, seal and all, or be flung over the parapet into the river. Martin of Galway, 'Humanity Dick,' made nearly the same proposal to an Irish process-server, who was foolish enough to venture into a district where the royal writs never ran.

'In such partial views of early times,' says Savigny, 'we resemble the travellers who remark with great astonishment that in France the little children, nay, even the common people, speak French with perfect fluency.'<sup>1</sup> There is not a country in Europe, and hardly a county in England, where they are not ready

<sup>1</sup> 'The Vocation of our Age for Legislation and Jurisprudence,' chap. ii.



to name some individual traveller by whom the same astonishment was expressed. The echo which politely replies, 'very well, I thank you,' to the ordinary inquiry after health, may be heard in Gascony as well as at Killarney. Who has not laughed at the story of the letter-writer who concludes—'I would say more but for an impudent Irishman who is looking over my shoulder, and reading everything I write'—with the self-betraying denial of the Irishman, 'that's a d——d lie'? A similar story may be read in Galland's '*Paroles Remarquables des Orientaux*.' It is not impossible that this comic incident or fiction gave Frederic the Great the hint for the terrible *coup de théâtre* in the tent of the officer who, when all lights had been forbidden under pain of death, was found finishing a letter to his wife by the light of a taper:—'Add a post-script. Before this reaches you I shall be shot for disobedience of orders;' and shot he was. Mrs. Norton has based a beautiful song upon this event, which is only too well attested.

The same spirit of inquiry which may rob us of some cherished illusions, may also relieve human nature from an unmerited stigma of barbarism or cruelty. Thus, Heyne absolves Omar from the crime of burning the library of Alexandria; and serious doubts have assailed the authenticity of the order attributed to the Legate at the sack of Beziers in 1209—'Kill them all. God will recognise his own.' M. Fournier has devoted an entire section to the charge against Charles IX., of firing on the Huguenots with an arquebuss from the window of the Louvre during the Massacre of St. Bartholomew; and his verdict, after collating the authorities, is, 'not proven.' In the '*Journal*' of Barbier the scene is laid in the balcony of the palace of the *Petit Bourbon*, pulled down in 1758.

Shenstone defined good writing to consist in or of 'spontaneous thought and laboured expression.' Many

famous sayings comprise these two elements of excellence; the original writer or speaker furnishing the thought, and the chronicler the expression. When the omission, addition, or alteration of a word or two will give point and currency to a phrase, or even elevate a platitude into wit or poetry, the temptation to the historian or biographer seems irresistible.

Chateaubriand, in his 'Analyse raisonnée de l'Histoire de France,' relates that Philip the Sixth, flying from the field of Crecy, arrived late at night before the gates of the Castle of Broye, and, on being challenged by the chatelaine, cried out, '*Ouvrez; c'est la fortune de la France!*' 'a finer phrase than that of Cæsar in the storm; magnanimous confidence, equally honourable to the subject and the monarch, and which paints the grandeur of both in the monarchy of Saint Louis.' The received authority for this phrase was Froissart, and it will be found faithfully reproduced in the old English translation of Lord Berners. The genuine text is now admitted to be—'*Ouvrez, ouvrez; c'est l'infortuné roi de France!*' Buchon, the learned editor of the French Chronicles, hastened to Chateaubriand with the discovery, and suggested the propriety of a correction in the next edition of his book, but found the author of the 'Genius of Christianity' bent on remaining *splendide mendax* and insensible to the modest merit of truth.

Chateaubriand was no less zealous for the authenticity of Francis the First's famous note to his mother after the battle of Pavia: '*Tout est perdu fors l'honneur,*' which, till recently, rested on tradition and popular belief. The real letter has been printed by M. Champollion from a manuscript journal of the period, and begins thus:—

'Madame,—Pour vous advertir comment se porte le ressort de mon infortune, de toutes choses n' m'est demouré que l'honneur *et la vie qui est sauvé*, et pour ce que en nostre

adversité cette nouvelle vous fera quelque resconfort, j'ay prié qu'on me laissât pour escrire ces lettres, ce qu'on m'a agréablement accordé.'

M. Fournier suggests that the current version may be traced to the Spanish historian, Antonio de Vera, who translates the alleged billet: '*Madama, toto se ha perdido sino es la honra.*'

In a note to the 'Henriade,' Voltaire says that Henry the Fourth wrote thus to Crillon:

'Pends-toi, brave Crillon; nous avons combattu à Arques, et tu n'y étais pas. Adieu, brave Crillon; je vous aime à tort et à travers.'

The real letter to Crillon was written from the camp before Amiens seven years after the affair of Arques, and is four times as long. It begins:—

'Brave Grillon, Pendes-vous de n'avoir este près de moy, lundi dernier, à la plus belle occasion,' &c. &c.

Henry seems to have been in the habit of telling his friends to hang themselves, for there is extant another billet of his, in the same style, to one who had lost an eye.

'Harambure, Pendes-vous de ne vous être trouvé près de moy en un combat que nous avons eu contre les ennemys, où nous avons fait rage,' &c. 'Adieu, Borgne.'

In the same sympathising spirit of generous emulation, 'See,' cried Nelson at Trafalgar, pointing to the Royal Sovereign as she steered right for the centre of the enemy's line, cut through it, and engaged a three-decker, 'See how that noble fellow, Collingwood, carries his ship into action.' Collingwood, delighted at being first in the heat of the fire, and knowing the feelings of his commander and friend, turned to his captain and exclaimed, 'What would Nelson give to be here!'

Strange to say, the French historians have once given credit for an honourable action, which was never performed, to Englishmen. The President

Hénault relates that an English governor had agreed with Du Guesclin to surrender a place on a given day if he was not relieved, and that, Du Guesclin's death occurring in the interval, the governor came out with his principal officers at the time fixed and laid the keys on the coffin of the Constable. Unluckily a contemporary chronicle has been produced, in which it is stated that the garrison tried to back out, and were brought to reason by a threat to put the hostages to death.

Froissart relates in touching detail the patriotic self-devotion of Eustache de Saint-Pierre and his five companions, who (he says) delivered up the keys of Calais to Edward the Third, bareheaded, with halters round their necks, and would have been hanged forthwith but for the intervention of the Queen. The story has been already doubted by Hume on the strength of another contemporary narrative, in which the King's generosity and humanity to the inhabitants are extolled ; when (in 1835) it was named as the subject of a prize-essay by an antiquarian society in the north of France, and the prize was decreed to M. Clovis Bolard, a Calais man, who took part against Saint-Pierre. The controversy was revived in 1854, in the '*Siècle*,' by a writer who referred to documents in the Tower as establishing that Saint-Pierre had been in connivance with the besiegers, and was actually rewarded with a pension by Edward.

On the other hand, the account given by Froissart of the return of the French King John (the captive at Poitiers) to England, by no means bears out the chivalrous turn given to it in the '*Biographie universelle*.' On hearing that his son, the Duke of Anjou, left as hostage, had broken faith, the King, says the writer resolved at once to go back, and constitute himself prisoner at London ; replying to all the objections of his council, that 'if good faith were banished from the rest of the

world, it should be found in the mouths of kings.' Froissart attributes the journey to a wish to see the King and Queen of England. 'Some,' remarks M. Michelet, 'pretend that John only went to get rid of the *ennui* caused by the sufferings of France, or to see some fair mistress.'

The adoption of the Garter for the name and symbol of the most distinguished order of knighthood now existing, is still involved in doubt. The incident to which it is popularly attributed was first mentioned by Polydore Virgil, who wrote nearly 200 years after its alleged occurrence. The age of the Countess of Salisbury (sixty at the time) is objected by M. Fournier, and it is worthy of remark that her husband died in consequence of bruises received at the jousts preceding the foundation of the order. It is not at all likely that such an incident would have been suppressed by Froissart, who makes no allusion to it, although it is entirely in his line and he is the principal authority for her amour with the King. Polydore Virgil's history appeared in 1536. In 1527, at the investiture of Francis the First, John Taylor, Master of the Rolls, in his address to the new knight, stated that Richard Cœur de Lion had once, on the inspiration of Saint George, distinguished some chosen knights by causing them to tie a throng or garter round the leg. Camden and others suggest that Edward the Third, in remembrance of this event, gave the garter as the signal for a battle, probably Crecy, in which he proved victorious. But the very number and variety of these speculations show that the real origin of the symbol cannot be traced. The motto is equally unaccountable, although as fit for the purpose as any other maxim or apothegm, whether connected with a tale of gallantry or not.<sup>1</sup>

As numerous questions of authenticity are made to

<sup>1</sup> See 'Memorials of the Order of the Garter,' &c. By G. F. Beltz, Lancaster Herald. London, 1841.

turn on the want of contemporary testimony when it might reasonably be expected to be forthcoming, it may be as well to call attention to what Varnhagen von Ense notes in his 'Diary.'

'Humboldt confirms the opinions I have more than once expressed, that too much must not be inferred from the silence of authors. He adduces three important and perfectly undeniable matters of fact, as to which no evidence is to be found where it would be most anticipated:—In the archives of Barcelona, no trace of the triumphal entry of Columbus into that city; in Marco Polo, no allusion to the Chinese Wall; in the archives of Portugal, nothing about the voyages of Amerigo Vespucci, in the service of that Crown.'

In Grafton's *Chronicles*, comprising the reign of King John, there is no mention of Magna Charta. But it has been suggested that the period of publication (1562) and his office of printer to Queen Elizabeth may account for the omission.

Humboldt's remarks refer to a reading at Madame Récamier's, in which he had pointed out some inaccuracies in the received accounts of the discovery of America. Robertson states that 'Columbus promised solemnly to his men that he would comply with their request (to turn back), provided they would accompany him and obey his command for three days longer, and if during that time land were not discovered, he would then abandon the enterprise, and direct his course towards Spain.' A closer examination of the authorities has shown that no such promise was given or required.<sup>2</sup> Robertson accepts, without questioning, the traditional account of Charles the Fifth's celebrating his own obsequies in his lifetime, as well as that of his fondness for mechanical contrivances.

<sup>1</sup> 'Briefe von Alexander von Humboldt an Varnhagen von Ense,' &c. 3rd edit. p. 57. 'We have read books called Histories of England, under the reign of George II., in which the rise of Methodism is not even mentioned.'—(Macaulay.)

<sup>2</sup> See Humboldt's '*Géographie du Nouveau Continent*,' vol. i.

'He was particularly curious in the construction of clocks and watches; and having found, after repeated trials, that he could not bring any two of them to go exactly alike, he reflected, it is said, with a mixture of surprise as well as regret, on his own folly, in having bestowed so much time and labour on the mere vain attempt of bringing mankind to a precise uniformity of sentiment concerning the profound and mysterious doctrines of religion.'<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Stirling (Sir W. Stirling Maxwell) and M. Mignet are at issue as to the credibility of the alleged obsequies; and although they both state the predilection of the retired Emperor for mechanics, it is very unlikely that the variations in his clocks led him to any reflection bordering on toleration or liberality; for almost with his dying breath he enjoined the persecution of heretics; and we learn from Mr. Stirling, that 'in taking part in the early religious troubles of his reign, it was ever his regret that he did not put Luther to death when he had him in his power.' At all events, the tradition may have suggested Pope's couplet, although he has given a different turn to the thought—

'Tis with our judgments as our watches; none  
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.'

It is related of Raleigh, that, having vainly endeavoured to ascertain the rights of a quarrel that fell out beneath his window, he exclaimed against his own folly in endeavouring to write the true history of the world. We have found no authority for this anecdote, and the famous one of his cloak first occurs in 'Fuller's Worthies.' When Sir Robert Walpole, on being asked what he would have read to him, replied: 'Not history, for that I know to be false,' he was probably

<sup>1</sup> Robertson's 'Charles the Fifth,' book xii. Compare Stirling's 'Cloister Life of the Emperor,' and Mignet's 'Charles Quint.' Lord Stanhope has printed in the first series of his 'Miscellanies' a letter from Sir W. Stirling Maxwell, and a letter from Lord Macaulay, on the subject of the clocks.

thinking less of the difficulty that struck Raleigh, than of the presumption of some writers of his day, in pretending to be at home in the councils of princes and perfectly acquainted with the hidden springs of his own measures or policy.

In France, writers of eminence have openly professed their indifference to strict accuracy. Besides the memorable *mon siège est fait* of Vertot, we find Voltaire, on being asked where he had discovered a startling fact, replying, 'Nowhere; it is a frolic (*esprit-glerie*) of my imagination.' The frolic was, that, when the French became masters of Constantinople in 1204, they danced with the women in the sanctuary of the church of Sainte Sophia. Some modern French historians have not disdained to follow in his track.

'Like old Voltaire, who placed his greatest glory  
In cooking up an entertaining story,  
Who laughed at truth whene'er his simple tongue  
Would snatch amusement from a tale or song.'

The decisive turn in the battle of Fontenoy, which converted it into a French victory, was cooked up by him with such success that subsequent historians of the highest eminence have been misled.<sup>1</sup>

We should like to know whether M. Lamartine had any warrant beyond his own rich imagination for these passages in his description of the battle of Waterloo:

'He (Wellington) gallops towards two of his dragoon regiments drawn up on the edge of the ridge. He has the curbs of the bridles taken off, so that the animal, carried away by the descent and the mass, without the hand of the rider being able even involuntarily to check it, may throw itself with an irresistible rush and weight on the French cavalry—a desperate manœuvre, worthy of the Numidians against the Romans, and which the size and impetuosity of the British horse rendered more desperate still. He has brandy served out to the riders to intoxicate the men with

<sup>1</sup> See the Essay on Marshal Saxe.



fire, whilst the trumpet intoxicates the horse, and he himself hurls them, at full speed, on the slopes of Mont St. Jean.'<sup>1</sup>

A little further on, we find the Duke on his eighth and wounded horse, although it is notorious that Copenhagen carried him freshly through the entire battle; and towards the end—

'He sends from rank to rank to his intrepid Scotch the order to let themselves be approached without firing, to pierce the breast of the horses with the point of the bayonet, to slip even under the feet of the animals, and to rip them up (*éventrer*) with the short and broad sword of these children of the North. The Scotch obey, and themselves on foot charge our regiments of horse.'

M. de Lamartine is a poet, and may have imported in his own despite a flight or two of original invention into his prose. But M. Thiers is a grave statesman as well as a brilliant and picturesque narrator. His information is derived principally, almost exclusively, from French sources. His point of view is essentially and invariably French, and his works afford an unimpeachable test of the kind of history most esteemed by his countrymen. The scene is the channel before Boulogne, where, on the 26th August, 1804, a squadron of French gunboats were engaged against an English squadron of frigates and other vessels.

'The Emperor, who was in his barge (*canot*) with Admiral Bruix, the Ministers of War and Marine, and several Marshals, dashed into the middle of the gunboats engaged, and, to set them an example, had himself steered right upon the frigate which was advancing at full sail. He knew that the soldiers and sailors, admirers of his audacity on land, sometimes asked one another whether he would be equally audacious at sea. He wished to edify them on this point, and to accustom them to brave recklessly the large vessels of the enemy. He had his barge taken far in advance of the French line, and *as near as possible to the frigate*. The

<sup>1</sup> 'Histoire de la Restauration,' vol. iv. p. 246.

frigate, seeing the imperial flag flying in the barge, and guessing, perhaps, its precious cargo, had reserved its fire. The Minister of Marine, trembling for the result to the Emperor of such a bravado, tried to throw himself upon the bar of the rudder to change the direction; but an imperious gesture of Napoleon stopped the movement of the minister, and they continued their course towards the frigate. Napoleon was watching it, glass in hand, when all of a sudden it discharged its reserved broadside, and covered with its projectiles the boat which carried Cæsar and his fortune. *No one was wounded, and they were quit for the splashing of the shot.* All the French vessels, witnesses of this scene, had advanced as fast as they could to sustain the fire, and to cover, by passing, the barge of the Emperor. The English division, assailed in its turn by a hail of balls and grape, began to retrograde, little by little. It was pursued, but it returned anew, tacking towards the land. During this interval a second division of gunboats, commanded by Captain Pevrieu, had raised anchor and borne down upon the enemy. Very soon the frigate, much damaged and steering with difficulty, was obliged to gain the open sea. The corvettes followed this movement of retreat, several much shattered, and the cutter so riddled that it was seen to go down. Napoleon quitted Boulogne enchanted with the combat in which he had taken part, the rather that the secret intelligence coming from the coast of England gave him the most satisfactory details on the moral and material effect this combat had produced.'¹

According to the English version, the damage to our ships arose from their pursuing the French under the fire of the batteries. But the internal evidence of the

¹ 'Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire,' vol. v. p. 229. Compare James's 'Naval History,' vol. iii. p. 333. This writer deduces from the affair that the gunboats could not face the cruisers, adding, 'None knew this better than Napoleon. The affair of 25th August, of which he had *unintentionally* been an eye-witness, convinced him.' M. Thiers told the writer that the authority for his account of the affair was a document in the *Archives de la Marine*, drawn up and deposited there by the command of the Emperor, whose well-known practice it was to concoct or falsify the *pièces justificatives* of history. He did all in his power to mystify the battle of Marengo. After writing three varying and false accounts, he caused all the original documents to be destroyed.

narrative is enough. By way of *pendant* to Napoleon attacking an English frigate in his barge, M. Thiers should reproduce, as the representation of an historical fact, the picture, once in high favour for snuff-boxes, of a line of English soldiers recoiling from a wounded French grenadier, who flourishes his sword with one knee upon the ground.

Beyle (Stendhal), who was with the French army during the whole of the Russian campaign of 1812, ridicules the notion of speeches on battle-fields, and declares that he once saw a French colonel lead a gallant charge with a piece of ribaldry, '*Suivez-moi, mes enfans ; mon derrière est rond !*' adding, that it answered the purpose perfectly well. It is certain that most of those reported by historians were never made at all. The Duke of Wellington did not say 'Up Guards and at them,' at Waterloo: he never took refuge in a square; and his 'What will they say in England if we are beat?' was addressed to some officers of his staff, not to a shattered regiment. The best of his biographers, the Chaplain-general, relates that, in the battle of the Nivelle (November, 1813), the Duke rode up to the 85th regiment and said in his (the Subaltern's) hearing, 'You must keep your ground, my lads, for there is nothing behind you.'

'Follow my white plume,' the traditional rallying cry of Henry IV., is quite consistent with Brantôme's description of him at Coutras, 'with long and great plumes, floating well, saying to his people, *Ostez-vous devant moy, ne m'offusquez pas, car je veux paroistre.*' The noble speech given to Henri de La Rochejacquelin is too finished and antithetical for the unpretending character of the man: *Si j'avance, suivez-moi : si je tombe, vengez-moi : si je recule, tuez-moi.* This young hero had no quality of a leader beyond chivalrous gallantry and courage, and looked to no higher reward for his services, if the royalist cause had triumphed,

than the command of a regiment of hussars. The real hero of the Vendean insurrection was the Marquis de Lescure. His widow married Henri's brother before the publication of her Memoirs, and thus the name of La Rochejacquelin has become imperishably associated with the most brilliant episode of the Revolution.

Voltaire makes Condé throw his baton of command over the enemies' palisades at Fribourg. Other accounts say 'his marshal's baton.' He was not a marshal: he did not carry a baton; and what he threw was his cane. A finer trait is told of Douglas, who, on his way to the Holy Land with Bruce's heart, took part with the Spaniards against the Moors, and lost his life in a skirmish:—

'When he found the enemy press thick round him, he took from his neck the Bruce's heart, and speaking to it as he would have done to the king had he been alive, he said, "Pass first in fight as thou wert wont to do, and Douglas will follow thee or die." He then threw the king's heart among the enemy, and rushing forward to the place where it fell, was slain. His body was found lying above the silver case.'

An attentive bystander reports a very sensible speech as made by Condé at Lens. 'My friends, take courage; we cannot help fighting to-day; it will be useless to draw back; for I promise you, that, brave men or cowards, all shall fight, the former with good will, the latter perforce.'

For more than a century the authenticity of the pithy dialogue between the spokesmen of the French and English Guards at Fontenoy was generally allowed. Lord Charles Hay, hat in hand, steps forward, and says with a bow, 'Gentlemen of the French Guards, fire.' M. d'Auteroche advances to meet him, and saluting him with the sword, says, 'Monsieur, we never fire first, do you fire.' Unfortunately for this

<sup>1</sup> 'Tales of a Grandfather, vol. i. ch. xi.

story, a letter (first brought to light by Mr. Carlyle) from Lord Charles Hay to his brother, Lord Tweeddale, written or dictated less than three weeks after the battle, has been preserved, in which he says, 'It was our regiment that attacked the French guards, and when we came within twenty or thirty paces of them, I advanced before our regiment, drank to them, and told them we were the English guards, and hoped they would stand still until we came up to them and not swim the Scheld as they did the Mayn at Dettingen. Upon which I immediately turned about to our own regiment, speeched them, and made them huzzah—I hope with a will. An officer (d'Aute-roche) came out of the ranks, and tried to make his men huzzah; however, there were not above three or four in their brigade that did.' This certainly puts a different complexion upon the matter, by converting a chivalrous intercourse of courtesy into 'chaff.'

The 42nd Highlanders played a distinguished part at Fontenoy. As the regiment was going into action, Sir Robert Monro, the commanding officer, was astonished to see the chaplain (Dr. Adam Ferguson, the historian), at the head of the column, with a drawn broadsword in his hand. He desired him to go to the rear with the surgeons; a proposal which Ferguson spurned. Sir Robert at length told him that his commission did not entitle him to be there. 'D—n my commission,' said the chaplain, throwing it towards the Colonel. The authority for this story is Sir Walter Scott. A critic like Fournier might object that the chaplain was not likely to have his commission in his pocket; and the family tradition is that he flung his bible into the air and seized a neighbour's sword to charge with his flock.

Lord Macaulay tells a parallel anecdote of Michael Godfrey, the Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England, who was standing near King William and under fire at the siege of Namur. 'Mr. Godfrey, said William, 'you ought not to run these hazards; you are not a

soldier; you can be of no use to us here.' 'Sir,' answered Godfrey, 'I run no more hazard than your Majesty.' 'Not so,' said William; 'I am where it is my duty to be, and I may without presumption commit my life to God's keeping; but you'— While they were talking a cannon-ball from the ramparts laid Godfrey dead at the King's feet.

When Charles XII. of Sweden was entering his barge to lead the attack on Copenhagen, he found the French ambassador, the Comte de Guiscard, at his side. 'Monsieur,' he said, 'you have no business with the Danes: you will go no farther, if you please.' 'Sire,' replied the Comte, 'the King, my master, has ordered me to remain near your Majesty. I flatter myself you will not banish me to-day from your court, which has never been so brilliant.' So saying, he gave his hand to the King, who leaped into the barge, followed by Count Piper and the Ambassador.

Two curious anecdotes of Wolfe have been opportunely rescued from oblivion or neglect by Earl Stanhope. The one is, that, at a dinner with Lord Chatham and Earl Temple just before he sailed for the Quebec expedition, he drew his sword and flourished it over his head, vowing that he would make minced meat of the French. The other, that, as the troops were floating up the river with the tide for the night-surprise on the heights of Abraham, Wolfe repeated the whole of Gray's 'Elegy' in a low voice to the officers in his boat, and said at the close—'Now, gentlemen, I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec.' The first of these anecdotes is a reminiscence of the late Right Hon. Thomas Grenville, who had it from Lord Temple. The second is confirmed by Professor Robinson, of Edinburgh, who began life as a midshipman and was in the boat with Wolfe.

The dying words of Wolfe are well known, and well authenticated. On hearing an officer exclaim

—‘See how they run,’ he eagerly raised himself on his elbow, and asked—‘Who run?’ ‘The enemy,’ answered the officer; ‘they give way in all directions.’ ‘Then God be praised,’ said Wolfe, after a short pause; ‘I shall die happy.’ His antagonist, the Marquis of Montcalm, received a mortal wound whilst endeavouring to rally his men, and expired the next day. When told that his end was approaching, he answered—‘So much the better; I shall not live then to see the surrender of Quebec.’

Napoleon stated at St. Helena that Desaix fell dead at Marengo without a word. Thiers makes him say to Boudet, his chief of division: ‘Hide my death, for it might dishearten the troops’—the dying order of the Constable Bourbon at the taking of Rome. The speech ordinarily given to Desaix, and inscribed on his monument, is confessedly a fiction. What passed between him and Napoleon, when they first met upon the field, has been differently related. One version is that Desaix exclaimed—‘The battle is lost;’ and that Napoleon replied—‘No; it is won: advance directly.’ That of M. Thiers is, that a circle was hastily formed round the two generals, and a council of war held, in which the majority were for retreating. The First Consul was not of this opinion, and earnestly pressed Desaix for his, who then, looking at his watch, said—‘Yes, the battle is lost; but it is only three o’clock; there is still time enough to gain one.’ For this again a parallel may be found. The Baron de Sirot, who commanded the French reserve at Rocroy, was told that the battle was lost. ‘No, no!’ he exclaimed, ‘it is not lost; for Sirot and his companions have not yet fought.’ Desaix, it will be remembered, had turned back without waiting for orders on hearing the firing; and M. Thiers thinks that, if Grouchy had done the same at Waterloo, the current of the world’s history might have been reversed. He is welcome to think so; but the Hero of a Hundred

Fights thought differently. A drawn battle and a short respite were the very utmost Grouchy's timely arrival could have gained for his Imperial master.

All the flashes of instinctive heroism and prescient thirst of glory which are commonly ascribed to Nelson are indisputable. It has been vaguely rumoured, indeed, that the signal originally proposed by him at Trafalgar was—'*Nelson* expects every man to do his duty,' and that *England* was substituted at the suggestion of Hardy or Blackwood. According to the authentic narrative of Southey, Nelson asked Captain Blackwood if he did not think there was a signal wanting. 'Blackwood made answer that he thought the whole fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about. The words were scarcely spoken before that signal was made which will be remembered as long as the language or even the memory of England shall endure.' Nelson's last intelligible words were—'Thank God, I have done my duty.'

Dying words and speeches present an ample field for the inventive faculties of biographers and historians.<sup>1</sup> It is reported that Louis XIV.'s to Madame de Maintenon were:—'We shall soon meet again;' and that she murmured—'A pleasant rendezvous he is giving me; that man never loved anyone but himself.' Of Talleyrand, M. Louis Blanc relates—'When the Abbé Dupanloup repeated to him the words of the Archbishop of Paris, "I would give my life for M. de Talleyrand," he replied—"He might make a better use of it," and expired.'

Do such narratives command implicit faith? Did

<sup>1</sup> Montaigne is the first who gave the impulse in that direction. 'Il n'est rien,' says he in his *Essays* (liv. i. ch. xix.), 'de quoy je m'informe si volontiers que de la mort des hommes, quelle parole, quel visage, quelle contenance ils y ont eu. . . . Si j'estois faiseur de livres, je feroys un registre commenté des morts diverses.' Since then many volumes have been written on the subject in France, in Holland, in Germany, and in England. *Last Words of Eminent Persons*, compiled by Joseph Kaines (London, 1866), is a sort of general résumé.



Goethe die calling for light? or Frederic Schlegel with *aber* (*but*) in his mouth? or Chesterfield just after telling the servant, with characteristic politeness—‘Give Dayrolles a chair’? or Locke remarking to Mrs. Masham—‘Life is a poor vanity’? Did the expiring Addison call the young Earl of Warwick to his bedside that he might learn ‘how a Christian could die’? Was Pitt’s heart broken by Austerlitz, and were the last words he uttered—‘My country, oh, my country’? George Rose, who had access to the best information, says they were; and says also that the news of the armistice after the battle of Austerlitz drove Pitt’s gout from the extremities to the stomach.<sup>1</sup> Lord Chatham made his son William read to him, a day or two before he died, the passage of Pope’s ‘Homer’ describing the death of Hector, and when he had done, said—‘Read it again.’

The peculiar taste and tendencies of our neighbours across the Channel have produced a plentiful crop of melodramatic scenes, with words to match. Their revolutionary annals abound in them; many true, many apocryphal, and not a few exaggerated or false. The crew of *Le Vengeur*, instead of going down with the cry of *Vive la République*, shrieked for help, and many were saved in English boats. The bombastic phrase, *La garde meurt et ne se rend pas*, attributed to Cambronne who was made prisoner at Waterloo, was vehemently denied by him, and when, notwithstanding his denial, the town of Nantes was authorised by royal ordinance to inscribe it on his statue, the sons of General Michel laid formal claim to it for their father. It was invented by Rougemont, a prolific author of *mots*, two days after the battle, and printed in the *Indépendant*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written, Earl Stanhope has cleared up both questions. Pitt’s death was clearly accelerated by the continental news; and his last intelligible words were: ‘Oh, my country! How I leave my country.’

<sup>2</sup> When pressed by a pretty woman to repeat the phrase he really did

The Comte Beugnot, provisional Minister of the Interior, was the author of the eminently successful hit in the Comte d'Artois' address at the Restoration—'Plus de divisions; la paix et la France! Je la revois enfin! et rien n'y est changé, si ce n'est qu'il s'y trouve un Français de plus.' His Royal Highness, who had extemporised a few confused sentences, was as much surprised as anyone on reading a neat little speech comprising these words in the 'Moniteur.' On his exclaiming, 'But I never said it,' he was told that there was an imperative necessity for his having said it; and it became history. It was parodied in a clever caricature, made at the accession of Charles X., when the giraffe was first imported into France. The giraffe is represented with the well-known cocked hat and feathers of the king on its head and surrounded by the astonished animals of the *Jardin des Plantes*. 'Mes amis,' are the words put into its mouth, 'il n'y a rien de changé; il n'y a qu'une Bête de plus.'

M. Séguier denied—*La cour rend des arrêts et non pas des services*. M. de Salvandy claimed—*C'est une fête Napolitaine, Monseigneur: nous dansons sur un volcan*—addressed to the Duke of Orleans (Louis Philippe) at a ball given to the King of Naples on the eve of the Revolution of July.

It has been the fashion of late years in France to depreciate the capacity and the wit of Talleyrand, in forgetfulness, that, if the good sayings of others have been frequently lent to him, *on ne prête qu'aux riches*. M. Fournier asserts, on the written authority of Talleyrand's brother, that the only breviary used by the ex-bishop was *L'Improvisateur français*, a compilation of anecdotes and *bons-mots*, in twenty-one duodecimo use, Cambronne replied,—'Ma foi, Madame, je ne sais pas au juste ce que j'ai dit à l'officier anglais qui me criait de me rendre; mais ce qui est certain est qu'il comprenait le français, et qu'il m'a répondu *mange*.' The surrender of the whole Imperial Guard (16,000 strong) at Metz forms an awkward comment on *La garde meurt et ne se rend pas*.

volumes. Whenever a good thing was wandering about in search of a parent, he adopted it,—amongst others, *C'est le commencement de la fin*. The theory of royal shaving, already mentioned, was Napoleon's; and the remark on the emigrants, that they had neither learnt nor forgotten anything, has been found almost verbatim in a letter from the Chevalier de Panat to Mallet du Pan in 1796. When Harel wished to put a joke or witticism into circulation, he was in the habit of connecting it with some celebrated name, on the chance of reclaiming it if it took—

‘He cast off his jokes as a huntsman his pack,  
For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them back.’

Thus he assigned to Talleyrand in the ‘Nain Jaune’ the phrase: ‘speech was given to man to disguise his thoughts.’ In one of Voltaire’s dialogues, the capon says of men: ‘they only use thought to sanction their injustice, and only employ words to disguise their thoughts.’ There is also a couplet by Young:

‘Where Nature’s end of language is disguised,  
And men talk only to conceal their mind.’

The germ of the conceit has been discovered in one of South’s Sermons; and Mr. Forster puts in a claim for Goldsmith on the strength of Jack Spindle’s remark (in the ‘Citizen of the World’), that the true use of speech is not so much to express our wants as to conceal them. He also claims for Goldsmith a well-known joke, attributed to Sheridan, on his son’s saying that he had gone down a mine to be able to say he had done so: “Why not say you had, without going down?” The embryo of Lord Macaulay’s New Zealander has been discovered in a letter from Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, ‘At last some curious traveller from Lima will visit England, and give a description of the ruins of St. Paul’s, like the editions of Balbec and Palmyra.’ The New Zealander first came upon the stage in 1840, in a review of Ranke’s ‘History of the Popes;’

but the same image in a less compact shape was employed by Lord Macaulay in 1824, in the concluding paragraph of a review of Mitford's 'Greece.'<sup>1</sup>

Talleyrand had frequently the adroitness or good luck to get credit for saying of others what was said against himself. Thus, *Qui ne l'adorerait ?—Il est si vicieux*—was said by Montrond of him, not by him of Montrond. Again, when he told a squinting politician, who asked how things were going on, *de travers, comme vous voyez*, he can hardly have forgotten 'the frequent inkstand whizzing past his ear,' with the accompaniment of *Vil émigré, tu n'as pas le sens plus droit que le pied*.<sup>2</sup> Both Rogers and Lord Brougham give him the interrogatory to the sick or dying man, who cried out that he was suffering the torments of the damned—'*Déjà ?*' M. Louis Blanc says :

'It is also related—and it is by priests, that the fact, improbable as it is, has been silently propagated—that the king (Louis Philippe) having asked M. de Talleyrand if he suffered, and the latter having answered, "Yes, like the damned," Louis Philippe murmured this word, *Déjà*—a word that the dying man heard, and which he revenged forthwith by giving to one of the persons about him secret and terrible indications.'"

The repartee, one of Le Brun's, has been attributed to many : to the Regent at the death-bed of Dubois ; to the confessor of the Abbé de Terray ; and to the medical adviser of De Retz.

The French have a perfect phrensy for *mots*. No event is complete without one, bad, good, or indifferent. When Armand Carrel and Emile Girardin had taken

<sup>1</sup> 'When travellers from some distant region shall in vain labour to decipher on some mouldering pedestal the name of our proudest chief, shall hear savage hymns chaunted over some misshapen idol over the ruined dome of our proudest temple.'—*Miscellaneous Works*, vol. i. p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> Words addressed by Rewbell to Talleyrand at the Council Board, quoted in a note to Canning's 'New Morality,' in the *Antijacobin*.

their ground, and the seconds were loading the pistols, Carrel says to Girardin, 'If the fates are against me, Monsieur, and you write my biography, it will be honourable, won't it—that is to say, true?' 'Yes, Monsieur,' replied Girardin. This is related by M. Louis Blanc ('Histoire des Dix Ans'), with apparent unconsciousness of its extreme discourtesy or absurdity: 'If you kill me, you won't write what is false of me?' 'No.'

On the fate of Louis Seize being put to the vote, Siéyès, provoked by the urbanity of some of his colleagues, is reported to have exclaimed *La Mort—sans phrase*. He always denied the *sans phrase*, and Lord Brougham proves from the 'Moniteur' that he was guiltless of it. M. Mignet relates of him, that, on being asked what he did during the Reign of Terror, he made answer, '*J'ai vécu*'—'I lived.' This also he indignantly denied. Victor Hugo (in 'Marion de Lorme') has versified another similar *mot*:

' *Le Roi à L'Angely. Pourquoi vis-tu ?*  
*L'Angely. Je vis par curiosité.*'

During the same epoch, Siéyès, in correcting the proof sheets of a pamphlet in defence of his political conduct, read, 'I have *abjured* the republic,' printed by mistake for *adjured*! 'Wretch,' he exclaimed to the printer, 'do you wish to send me to the guillotine?'

As regards the famous invocation to Louis XVI. on the scaffold, *Fils de Saint-Louis, montez au ciel*, the Abbé Edgeworth frankly avowed to Lord Holland, who questioned him on the subject, that he had no recollection of having said it. It was invented for him, on the evening of the execution, by the editor of a newspaper.

During more than forty years no one dreamed of questioning Mirabeau's apostrophe to M. de Dreuz Brezè: 'Go tell your master that we are here by the will of the people, and that we will not depart other-

wise than at the point of the bayonet' (*'et que nous n'en sortirons que par la force des baïonnettes'*). On March 10, 1833, M. Villemain having pointedly referred to it in the Chamber of Peers, the Marquis de Dreuz Brezè rose and said :—

'My father was sent to demand the dissolution of the National Assembly. He entered with his hat on, as was his duty, speaking in the king's name. This offended the Assembly, already in an agitated state. My father, resorting to an expression which I do not wish to recall, replied that he should remain covered, since he spoke in the king's name. Mirabeau did not say, *Go, tell your master*. I appeal to all who were in the Assembly, and who may happen to be present now. Such language would not have been tolerated. Mirabeau said to my father, "We are assembled by the national will; we will only go out by force (*nous n'en sortirons que par la force*)."<sup>1</sup> I ask M. de Montlosier if that is correct' (M. de Montlosier gave a sign of assent). 'My father replied to M. Bailly, "I can recognise in M. Mirabeau only the deputy of the bailiwick of Aix, and not the organ of the National Assembly." The tumult increased; one man against five hundred is always the weakest. My father withdrew. Such is the truth in all its exactness.'

Another of Mirabeau's grand oratorical effects (April 12, 1790) was based upon a plagiarism and a fable: 'I see from this window, from which was fired the fatal arquebuss which gave the signal for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.'<sup>2</sup> He borrowed the allusion from Volney. Charles IX. did not fire from the window in question, if he fired on the Huguenots at all. The extent to which Mirabeau was indebted to others in the composition of his set speeches is mentioned in the 'Souvenirs sur Mirabeau,' by Dumont.

Horne Tooke is believed to have written the speech

<sup>1</sup> 'Moniteur,' March 11, 1833. In Bailly's 'Memoirs,' published in 1804, there is a third version.

<sup>2</sup> The speech is somewhat differently reported by Thiers, 'Révolution française,' vol. i. p. 148.

inscribed on the pedestal of Beckford's statue at Guildhall, purporting to be the reply extemporised by the spirited magistrate to George III. He himself had no distinct recollection of the precise words; and contemporary accounts differ whether his tone and manner were becoming or unbecoming the occasion.

It is well known that the great commoner's celebrated reply to Horace Walpole (the elder), beginning, 'The atrocious crime of being a young man,' is the composition of Dr. Johnson, who was not even present when the actual reply was spoken.

When the great Duke of Marlborough was asked his authority for an historical statement, he replied, 'Shakespeare; the only history of England I ever read.' Lord Campbell, whose reading is not so limited, remarks that Shakespeare, although careless about dates, is scrupulously accurate about facts, 'insomuch that our notions of the Plantagenet reigns are drawn from him rather than from Hollinshed, Rapin, or Hume.' Accordingly he requires us to put implicit faith in the immortal bard's version of the affair between the Chief Justice and Prince Hal, even to the order or request put into the Prince's mouth on his accession to the throne:—

'Therefore still bear the balance and the sword.'

'I shall prove to demonstration,' says Lord Campbell, 'that Sir William Gascoigne survived Henry IV. several years, and actually filled the office of Chief Justice of the King's Bench under Henry V.' 'The two records to which reference has been already made,' says Mr. Foss, in his 'Lives of the Chief Justices,' 'contain such conclusive proof that Sir William Gascoigne was not re-appointed to his place as Chief Justice, that it seems impossible that anyone can maintain the contrary.' In one of these, an Issue Roll of July 1413 (four months after the accession of Henry V.),

Gascoigne is described as 'late Chief Justice of the Bench of Lord Henry, father of the present King,' and the date of his successor's appointment turns out to be March 29, 1443, just eight days after Henry V.'s accession; from which Mr. Foss infers his especial eagerness to supersede his father's old and faithful servant. Both Lord Campbell and Mr. Foss are convinced of the occurrence of the main incidents, the blow or insult and committal. But the story did not appear in print till 1534. Hankford, Hody, and Matcham have been started as candidates for the honour of this judicial exploit by writers of respectability; and the late Mr. Henry Drummond proved from an ancient chronicle that identically the same story was told of Edward II. (while Prince of Wales) and the Chief Justice of Edward I.

Whether Richard II. was slain by Sir Pierce of Exton or starved to death in Pontefract Castle, is still a question. Zealous antiquaries have doubted whether he died there at all. Halliwell, after alluding to the authorities, remarks: 'Notwithstanding this exposure (of the body) the story afterwards prevailed, and is related by Hector Boece, that Richard escaped to Scotland, where he lived a religious life, and was buried at Stirling. The probability is that the real history of Richard's death will never be unravelled.'<sup>1</sup>

Rabelais has co-operated with Shakespeare in extending the belief that Clarence was drowned in a butt of Malmsey at his own special instance and request; and in a deservedly popular compilation, the precise manner of immersion is brought vividly before the mind's eye of the rising generation by a clever woodcut.<sup>2</sup> Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Halliwell's 'Shakespeare,' vol. ix. p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> 'Stories selected from the History of England, from the Conquest to the Revolution, for Children.' Fifteenth edition, illustrated with twenty-four wood-cuts. (By the late Right Hon. J. W. Croker.) London, 1854. The plan of the 'Tales of a Grandfather' was suggested by this book.



Bayley, in his 'History of the Tower,' can suggest no better foundation for the story than the well-known fondness of Clarence for Malmsey. 'Whoever,' says Walpole, in his 'Historic Doubts,' 'can believe that a butt of wine was the engine of his death, may believe that Richard (the Third) helped him into it, and kept him down till he was suffocated.'

Well might Dryden say that 'a falsehood once received from a famed writer becomes traditional to posterity.' Learned antiquaries will labour in vain to clear the memory of Sir John Falstolfe, identified with Falstaff, from the imputation of cowardice, yet there is strong evidence to show that he was rather hastily substituted for Sir John Oldcastle, whose family remonstrated against the slur cast on their progenitor in 'Henry the Fourth;' and that, instead of running away (as stated in the first part of 'Henry the Fourth') at the battle of Patay, Falstolfe did his devoir bravely.<sup>1</sup>

'When history,' remarks M. Van der Weyer, 'does not succeed in disfiguring the character of a great man, the dramatic authors take charge of it, and they rarely miss their aim.'<sup>2</sup> This tendency is not confined to the lower class of dramatists. Shakespeare's Joan of Arc is an embodiment of English prejudice; yet it is not much farther from the truth than Schiller's transcendental and exquisitely poetical character of the Maid. Schiller has also idealised Don Carlos to an extent that renders recognition difficult; and he has flung a halo round William Tell which will cling to the name whilst Switzerland is a country or patriotism any better than a term. Yet more than a hundred years ago (in 1760), the eldest son of Haller undertook to prove that the legend, in its main features, is the revival or imitation of a Danish

<sup>1</sup> 'Journal of the British Archæological Association,' vol. xiv. pp. 230-236. The paper was contributed by Mr. Pettigrew.

<sup>2</sup> Opuscules (Première Série) Pensées Diverses, p. 36.

one, to be found in Saxo Grammaticus. The canton of Uri, to which Tell belonged, ordered the book to be publicly burnt, and appealed to the other cantons to co-operate in its suppression : thereby giving additional interest and vitality to the question, which has been at length pretty well exhausted by German writers. The upshot is, that the episode of the apple is relegated to the domain of fable ; the bare existence of Gesler, the Austrian oppressor, is deemed apocryphal at best ; and Tell himself is grudgingly allowed a commonplace share in the exploits of the Swiss patriots. Strange to say, his name is not mentioned by any contemporary chronicler of the struggle for independence.<sup>1</sup>

Popular faith is ample justification for either poet or painter in the selection of a subject ; and for this very reason we must be on our guard against the prevalent habit of confounding the impressions made by artistic skill or creative genius with facts. We cannot believe that Mazarin continued to his last gasp surrounded by a gay bevy of ladies and gallants, flirting and gambling, as represented in a popular engraving ;<sup>2</sup> and a double alibi flings a cold shade of scepticism over 'The Last Moments of Leonardo da Vinci, expiring at Fontainebleau in the arms of Francis the First,' as a striking picture in the Louvre was described in the catalogue. Sir A. Callcott's picture of 'Milton and his Daughters,' one of whom holds a pen as if writing to his dictation, is in open defiance of Dr. Johnson's statement that the daughters were never taught to write.

<sup>1</sup> 'Die Sage von dem Schuss des Tell. Eine historisch-kritische Abhandlung, von Dr. Julius Ludwig Ideler.' Berlin, 1836. 'Die Sage vom Tell aufs Neue kritisch untersucht, von Dr. Ludwig Häusser. Eine von der philosophischen Facultät der Universität Heidelberg gekrönte Preisschrift.' Heidelberg, 1840. Conversations—Lexicon : Title : *Tell*. Another learned German, Pollack, in his History of Bohemia, has placed Ziska's skin in the same category with Tell's apple.

<sup>2</sup> Shortly before his death, after looking round on his pictures and other treasures of art, he said to his physician, '*Et il faut quitter tout cela.*'

Some fifteen or twenty years ago, a portrait at Holland House was prescriptively revered as a speaking likeness of Addison, and a bust was designed after it by a distinguished sculptor. It turned out to be the copy of a portrait of Sir Anthony Fountayne, still in the possession of his descendant, who has miniatures placing the identity beyond a doubt.

The picture of paramount importance in an historical point of view, which indeed might be confidently cited as a *pièce justificative* or proof, is the fresco painting in the Palace of Westminster of the alleged meeting between Wellington and Blücher at *La Belle Alliance*, by Maclise. It was commenced, if not completed, with the full sanction of the Committee of the Fine Arts; and their acting President, the Prince Consort, personally assured the artist that the popular belief in the place of meeting was well founded. Now, the Duke says in his despatch of the 19th June:—

‘I continued the pursuit *till long after dark*, and then discontinued it only on account of the fatigue of our troops, who had been engaged during twelve hours, *and because I found myself on the same road with Marshal Blücher*, who assured me of his intention to follow the enemy through the night.’

In a letter, dated Paris, June 8, 1816, to Mr. Mudford, after instancing the supposed meeting at *La Belle Alliance* as the sort of error to which writers were prone, he says:—

‘It happens that the meeting took place *after ten at night* in the village of Genappe, and anybody who attempts to describe with truth the operations of the two armies, will see that it could not be otherwise. The other part is not so material, but, in truth, I was not off my horse till I returned to Waterloo between eleven and twelve at night.’<sup>1</sup>

The Duke must have been mistaken in the name of the place, for Blücher himself did not get farther than

<sup>1</sup> ‘Supplementary Dispatches,’ vol. x. p. 508.

Genappe, which is eight or nine miles from the battle-field and was not abandoned by the French before eleven. But there is a host of concurring evidence as to the lateness of the hour of meeting, which is quite irreconcilable with the notion that it took place at *La Belle Alliance*.

In the People's Edition of Dr. Gleig's 'Life of the Duke of Wellington,' based on information supplied by the Duke, it is stated that 'indifferent to the thousand risks which surrounded him, he pushed on and drew bridle only when he and Blücher met at the *Maison du Roi*. Here it was arranged that the Prussians, who had fallen in upon the same road with the English, should continue the pursuit.' If the Prussians had fallen in upon the same road with the English at *La Belle Alliance*, this would go far towards establishing the point for which M. Bernardi, in common with other German writers, contends:—namely, that the flank attack of the Prussians decided the day, and that the rout was already complete when the simultaneous advance of the whole English line, which he deems superfluous, took place.<sup>1</sup> *Maison du Roi* (or *Maison Rouge*, as it is sometimes called) is between two and three miles from the field of battle. *La Belle Alliance* formed a central point in the position occupied by the French when the battle began.

Each branch of the Fine Arts has contributed its quota to the roll of unexpected successes and sudden bounds into celebrity. There is the story of Poussin impatiently dashing his sponge against the canvas, and producing the precise effect (the foam on a horse's mouth), which he had been long and vainly labouring for; and there is a similar story told of Haydn, the musical composer, when required to imitate a storm at sea. 'He kept trying all sorts of passages, ran up

<sup>1</sup> 'Staatengeschichte,' vol. vii. This question, as well as that of the first arrival of the news of the victory in London, are fully discussed in notes to 'Diaries of a Lady of Quality,' sec. ed., pp. 167, 291.

and down the scale, and exhausted his ingenuity in heaping together chromatic intervals and strange discords. Still Curtz (the author of the libretto) was not satisfied. At last the musician, out of all patience, extended his hands to the two extremities of the keys, and, bringing them rapidly together, exclaimed—"The deuce take the tempest; I can make nothing of it." "That is the very thing," exclaimed Curtz, delighted with the *truth* of the representation.' Neither Haydn nor Curtz, adds the author from whom we quote, had ever seen the sea.<sup>1</sup>

The touching incident of Chantry working for Rogers as a journeyman cabinet-maker at five shillings a day was related by himself; and a mould for butter or jelly was the work which first attracted notice to the genius of Canova.

The romance of the bar diminishes apace before the severe eye of criticism. Erskine went on telling everybody, till he probably believed what he was telling, that his fame and fortune were established by his speech for Captain Baillie, made a few days after he had assumed the gown. 'That night,' were his words to Rogers, 'I went home and saluted my wife, with sixty-five retaining fees in my pocket.' Retaining fees are paid to the clerk at chambers, and the alleged number is preposterous. At a subsequent period we find him hurrying to his friend, Reynolds, with two bank notes for 500*l.* each, his fee in the Keppel case, and exclaiming—'*Voilà* the nonsuit of cowbeef.' Cowbeef must have been already nonsuited if the sixty-five retaining fees, or half of them, had been paid.

Equally untenable is the notion that Lord Mansfield dashed into practice by his speech in *Cibber v. Sloper*, in reference to which he is supposed to have said that he never knew the difference between no professional income and three thousand a year. From the printed

<sup>1</sup> Hogarth's 'Musical History,' vol. i. p. 293.

reports of the trial it is clear that Serjeant Eyre, instead of being seized with a fit and so giving Murray his opportunity, made a long speech, and that Murray was the fourth counsel in the cause. It was tried in Dec. 1738, the year after the publication of Pope's couplet—

‘Blest as thou art with all the power of words,  
So known, so honoured, in the House of Lords,’

rendered more memorable by Cibber's parody—

‘Persuasion tips his tongue whene’er he talks;  
And he has chambers in the King's Bench Walks.’

In these and most other instances of the kind, it has been truly said, *the* speech was a stepping-stone, not the key-stone. Patient industry and honest self-devotion to the duties of a profession are the main elements of success.

There is no valid ground for disputing the ‘*Anche io sono pittore*’ (‘I too am a painter’) of Correggio on seeing a picture by Raphael, although it has been given to others; nor the ‘*E pur si muove*’ (‘It moves notwithstanding’) of Galileo, which he muttered as he rose from the kneeling posture in which he had been sentenced by the Inquisition to recant his theory of the earth's motion. Lord Brougham, M. Biot, and other admirers of this great man, however, thinking the story derogatory to him, have urged the want of direct evidence on the point. It is related of a political writer who, for some offence to the House of Commons, was reprimanded kneeling at the bar by the Speaker, that, on rising, he said, half aloud, rubbing his knees, ‘What a very dirty House this is!’

‘I could prove by a very curious passage of Bulwer's, says M. Fournier, ‘how Archimedes could not have said, “Give me a *point d'appui*, and with a lever I will move the world.” He was too great a mathematician for that.’ We are not informed where this very curious passage is to be found; and Archimedes, according to

Plutarch, asked for a place to stand on, not a fulcrum, nor did he specify the instrument to be employed.<sup>1</sup>

Sir David Brewster, in his *Life of Newton*, says that neither Pemberton, nor Whiston, who received from Newton himself the history of his first ideas of gravity, records the story of the falling apple. It was mentioned, however, to Voltaire by Catherine Barton, Newton's niece, and to Mr. Green by Mr. Martin Folkes, the President of the Royal Society. '*We saw the apple tree in 1814, and brought away a portion of one of its roots.*'<sup>2</sup> The concluding remark reminds us of Washington Irving's hero, who boasted of having parried a musket bullet with a small sword, in proof of which he exhibited the sword a little bent in the hilt. The apple is supposed to have fallen in 1665.

Sometimes an invented pleasantry passes current for fact, like the asparagus and '*Point d'huile*' of Fontenelle, invented by Voltaire as an illustration of how Fontenelle would have acted in such a contingency.<sup>3</sup> One day, when Gibbon was paying his addresses to Mademoiselle Churchod (afterwards Madame Necker), she asked why he did not go down on his knees to her. 'Because you would be obliged to ring for your footman to get me up again.' This is the sole foundation for the story of his actually falling on his knees, and being unable to get up. There is another mode in which a mystification, or a joke, may create or perpetuate a serious error. Father Prout (Mahony) trans-

<sup>1</sup> Archimedes one day asserted to King Hiero, that, with a given power, he could move any given weight whatever; nay, it is said, from the confidence he had in his demonstrations, he ventured to affirm that if there was another earth besides this we inhabit, by going into that, he would move this wherever he pleased.—Langhorne's *Plutarch*.

<sup>2</sup> '*Life of Newton*,' vol. ii. p. 27, note.

<sup>3</sup> Fontenelle is supposed to be supping with a friend who liked oil, which Fontenelle disliked. It was agreed that half the asparagus should be dressed with oil and half without. The friend falls down in an apoplectic fit, and Fontenelle's first care is to hurry to the door and call out '*Point d'huile.*'

lated several of the 'Irish Melodies' into Greek and Latin verse, and then jocularly insinuated a charge of plagiarism against the author. Moore was exceedingly annoyed and remarked to the writer, who made light of the trick: 'This is all very well for you London critics; but, let me tell you, my reputation for originality has been gravely impeached in the provincial newspapers on the strength of these very imitations.' Lauder's fraud imposed on Johnson, and greatly damaged Milton for a period. Diligent inquiry has brought home to a M. de Querlon the verses attributed to Mary Queen of Scots, beginning:—

'Adieu, plaisant pays de France!  
Oh, ma patrie,  
La plus chérie,  
Qui as nourri ma jeune enfance,' &c.

Cicero complained that funeral panegyrics had contributed to falsify the Roman annals, and *éloges* have done the same ill service to the French. From the absence or incapacity of the devil's advocate (*avvocato del Diabolo*) at the canonisation of saints, the number has been so recklessly multiplied that scores of them may be knocked over like ninepins by any duly qualified inquirer who cares to investigate their claims. De Launoy, the famous doctor of the Sorbonne, applied himself to the good work with such a will and such efficiency, that he acquired the title of *Le Grand Dénicheur des Saints*. Bonaventura d'Argonne said of him: 'He was an object of dread to heaven and to earth. He has dethroned more saints from paradise than ten Popes have canonised. Everything in the martyrology stirred his bile. . . . The curate of St. Eustache of Paris said: "When I meet the Doctor de Launoy, I bow to him down to the very ground, and I speak to him only hat in hand and with the deepest humility; so afraid am I of his depriving me of my St. Eustache, who hangs by a thread."'



Party malice has poisoned the streams of tradition, whilst carelessness, vanity, or the wanton love of mischief, has troubled them. Sir Robert Walpole was accused of the worst cynicism of corruption on the strength of his alleged maxim: 'All men have their price.' What he really said was: 'All *these* men have their price,' alluding to the so-called 'patriots' of the opposition. Many still believe Lord Plunkett to have denounced history as an old almanac, although his real expressions notoriously were, that those who read history like certain champions of intolerance, treat it as an old almanac. Torn from the context, Lord Lyndhurst's description of the Irish as 'aliens in blood, language, and religion,' sounded illiberal and impolitic. Taken with the context, it was merely a rhetorical admission and application of one of O'Connell's favourite topics for Repeal, when he wound up every speech by reminding his 'hereditary bondsmen' that they had nothing in common with their Saxon and Protestant oppressors.

Hero worship pushed to extravagance, as it recently has been by one popular writer (Mr. Carlyle), is quite as mischievous as the spirit of depreciation and incredulity. 'The world knows nothing of its greatest men;' or, rather, the world is required to accept no proof of greatness but success. Voltaire illustrates the matter by three examples. 'You carry Cæsar and his fortunes;' but if Cæsar had been drowned. 'And so would I, were I Parmenio;' but if Alexander had been beaten. 'Take these rags, and return them to me in the Palace of St. James;' <sup>1</sup> but Charles Edward was

<sup>1</sup> This is a fresh example of Voltaire's mode of dealing with facts. 'His (the Pretender's) shoes being very bad, Kingsburgh provided him with a new pair, and taking up the old ones said, "I will faithfully keep them till you are safely settled at St. James's. I will then introduce myself by shaking them at you, to put you in mind of your night's entertainment and protection under my roof." He smiled, and said, "Be as good as your word."'—*Account of the Escape of the Young Pretender*, first published in Boswell's 'Johnson.'

beaten. Nelson's early boast, that some time or other he would have a gazette to himself, would be remembered (if remembered at all) as a mere display of youthful vanity, if he had been killed at the commencement of his career; and to all outward seeming, the ebullition of conceit is rarely distinguishable from the prompting of genius or the self-assertion of desert. In strange contrast to Nelson, Wellington had so little of either quality, that, when a captain, he applied to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland (Lord Camden) for an Irish Commissionership of Customs, with the view of retiring from the army. Lord Eldon, when he married, seriously thought of giving up the bar to take orders and retire upon a curacy.

Henri Heine gave a new and ingenious turn to the apothegm, 'no man is a hero to his valet de chambre,' by the remark that, no man is less a hero because his valet de chambre is only a valet de chambre. But almost all heroes and men of genius suffer more or less whenever they are brought down from their pedestals, and compelled to mingle with the crowd. 'In the common occurrences of life,' writes Wolfe, 'I own I am not seen to advantage.' All accounts agree that Clive's person was ungraceful, that his harsh features were hardly redeemed from vulgar ugliness by their commanding expression, and that he was ridiculously fond of dress. In a letter to his friend, Mr. Orme, he says: 'Imprimis, what you can provide must be of the best and finest you can get for love or money: two hundred shirts—the wristbands worked; some of the ruffles worked with a border either in squares or points, and the rest plain; stocks, neckcloths, and handkerchiefs in proportion.'

Montaigne contends that, in treating of manners and motives, fabulous incidents, provided they be possible, serve the purpose as well as true. They may, if they are only used as illustrations; but to argue from them

as from proofs is to repudiate the inductive philosophy, and resort to the worst sort of *à priori* reasoning. Not long since an eminent naturalist surprised the public by a theory of canine instinct, which placed it very nearly on a footing with the human understanding. This theory turned out to be mainly based upon anecdotes of dogs, which some lads in one of the public offices had composed and forwarded to him, commonly as coming from country clergymen. Where is the difference in soundness between theories of animal nature based on such materials, and theories of human nature deduced from fictitious incidents or, like some of Montesquieu's on government, from travellers' stories about Bantam or Japan?<sup>1</sup>

It may naturally be asked whether we have any new test of heroism or criterion of authenticity to propose? By what process is the gold to be separated from the dross? How are the genuine pearls to be infallibly distinguished from the mock pearls? Is there no spear of Ithuriel to compel impostures or impostors to resume their natural proportions by a touch? Or, if Hotspur thought it an easy leap to 'pluck bright Honour from the pale-fac'd moon,' can it be so very difficult to drag naked Truth from the bottom of her well?

Archbishop Whately, on being asked to frame some canons for determining what evidence is to be received, declared it to be impossible, and added, that 'the full and complete accomplishment of such an object would confer on man the unattainable attribute of infallibility.'<sup>2</sup> His celebrated pamphlet will afford

<sup>1</sup> 'He said, "The value of every story depends on its being true. A story is a picture of an individual, or of human nature in general: if it be false, it is a picture of nothing."—Boswell's 'Life of Johnson.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Buonaparte.' Seventeenth edition. It is surprising that the author, or anyone else, could persistently mistake this over-estimated pamphlet for what it professed to be—an answer to Hume's chapter 'On Miracles;' or venture to contend that (faith apart) a logical mind which accepted the career of Napoleon as historically true, was *ex vi termini* equally bound to accept

little aid in the solution of the problem ; for the existence of Napoleon Buonaparte was never denied in any quarter, and is affirmed by the complete concurrence of contemporary testimony. This cannot be predicated of any events or current of events with which he attempts to establish a parallel ; and it is little to the point to urge that many of the exploits attributed to Napoleon are as extraordinary as any contested occurrences in history, sacred or profane. They are not what is commonly meant by impossible or contrary to the known laws of nature, which is what sceptics object to miracles.

His Grace must also admit that the invention of printing, with modern facilities of communication, have worked an entire change in the quality and amount of evidence which may be rationally accepted as the foundation of belief. A statement published to the whole civilised world, and remaining unchallenged, stands on a widely different footing from a statement set down by a monk in a chronicle, of which nothing was heard or known beyond the precincts of his convent until after the lapse of centuries. And what were his means of information when he wrote ? Probably some vague rumour or floating gossip carried from place to place by pedlars and pilgrims. There is a game called Russian Scandal, which is played in this fashion :—A. tells B. a brief narrative, which B. is to repeat to C., and C. to D., and so on. No one is to hear it told more than once, and each is to aim at scrupulous accuracy in the repetition. By the time the narrative has been transmitted from mouth to the whole of the scriptural miracles : including the staying of the sun and moon by Joshua, the conversation of Balaam with his ass, and the transmigration of the legion of devils from *two* maniacs according to St. Matthew, or *one* according to St. Mark and St. Luke, into a herd of swine computed at *two thousand* by St. Mark.

The various known modes of testing history are enumerated and discussed by Sir George C. Lewis, in 'A Treatise on the Methods of Observation and Reasoning in Politics.' In Two Volumes. 1842, Chap. 7.

mouth six or seven times, it has commonly undergone a complete transformation. The ordinary result of the experiment will afford an apt illustration of the value of oral testimony in times when the marvellous had an especial attraction for all classes.

‘The flying rumours gather’d as they rolled ;  
Scarce any tale was sooner heard than told,  
And all who told it added something new,  
And all who heard it made enlargements too ;  
In every ear it spreads, on every tongue it grew.’

But we must be on our guard against assuming that events never took place at all because there are material differences between the best accredited accounts of them. Lord Clarendon says, that the Royal Standard was erected at Nottingham on the 25th of August, ‘about six of the o’clock of the evening of a very stormy and tempestuous day.’ Other contemporary writers name the 22nd as the date of this memorable event. An equal amount of discrepancy will appear on comparing the accounts given by Clarendon, Burnet, Echard, and Wodrow of the condemnation and execution of Argyll. On what day, at what time of the day, and by whom, the intelligence of Napoleon’s escape from Elba was first communicated to the members of the Vienna Congress, are doubtful questions to this hour.

The account, given or confirmed by Prince Metternich in a letter to Varnhagen von Ense, is, that the first intelligence was contained in a dispatch from the Austrian Consul at Genoa, which he (the prince) received at six in the morning of the 7th March, but did not open till nearly eight. After personally communicating it to the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of Russia, and the King of Prussia, he requested the attendance of the Ministers Plenipotentiary who, he says, were ignorant of what had happened till he told them.

Villemain (‘*Souvenirs contemporains*’) states, on the

authority of the Comte de Narbonne (then a member of the French embassy at Vienna), that the news arrived by a message from Sardinia on the evening of the 5th March, during the representation of some *tableaux vivans* at the palace, at which the Comte was present.

Sir Walter Scott ('Life of Napoleon') says, that the announcement was made to the Congress on the 11th by Talleyrand, and that general laughter was the first emotion that it caused. In 'Recollections by Rogers' (p. 208), we are told that the Duke said he had received the first intelligence from Lord Burgherst (afterwards Earl of Westmoreland), then minister at Florence; that the instant it came he communicated it to the members of the Congress, and that they all laughed—the Emperor of Russia most of all! Sir William Erle, who dined and slept at Strathfieldsaye when going the Western Circuit as judge, called the Duke's attention to this statement, and asked if he remembered the laugh. The reply, of which Sir William Erle has favoured the writer with a note, ran thus:—

"Laugh! No: we did not laugh. We said, 'where will he go.' And Talleyrand said: 'I can't say where he will go; but I'll undertake to say where he'll not go, and that is to France.' Next day, when we met, the news had come that he had gone to France, and we laughed at Talleyrand. That's the only laugh I recollect." Then the Duke turned to another subject.<sup>1</sup>

According to another version, accredited in the diplomatic world, Metternich is supposed to have said: '*Quel événement!*' and Talleyrand to have answered: '*Non, ce n'est qu'une nouvelle.*' Talleyrand's reputed sagacity must have deserted him.

Again, the strangeness, or even absurdity, of an article of popular faith, is no ground for contemptuously rejecting it. 'What need you study for new

<sup>1</sup> *Edinburgh Review* for July, 1860. Art. ix. by the same writer.

subjects?' says the citizen to the speaker of the prologue in Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Knight of the Burning Pestle.' 'Why could you not be contented, as well as others, with the Legend of Whittington, or the Story of Queen Eleanor, or with the rearing of London Bridge upon Woolsacks?' Why not indeed, when a learned antiquary, besides putting in a good word for Eleanor and the woolsacks, maintains, plausibly and pleasantly, the authenticity of the legend of Whittington and most especially the part relating to the cat?<sup>1</sup>

Amongst the least defensible of Mr. Buckle's paradoxes is his argument, that historical evidence has been impaired by writing and printing, and that unaided tradition is the safest channel for truth. He deduces this startling conclusion from equally strange premises; 1, the degradation of the bards or minstrels, the professional guardians and repositories of legendary lore, by depriving them of their occupation; 2, the permanent form given to floating error when embalmed in a book. But this is tantamount to assuming that a story is cleared of falsehood by being handed down orally from age to age, as the purification of Thames water is promoted by length of pipe; and Scott states, that the degradation of the bards had begun whilst they were still in high request. This is his justification for making the bard of Lorn falsify the adventure of the Brooch of Lorn to glorify his master; thereby incurring the dignified rebuke of Bruce:—

Well hast thou framed, old man, thy strains  
To praise the hand that pays thy pains;  
Yet something might thy song have told  
Of Lorn's three vassals, true and bold,  
Who rent their lord from Bruce's hold.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Model Merchant of the Middle Ages, exemplified in the Story of Whittington and his Cat: being an Attempt to rescue that interesting Story from the Region of Fable, and to place it in its proper position in the legitimate History of the Country.' By the Rev. Samuel Lysons, M.A., Rector of Rodmarton, Gloucestershire, &c. &c. London and Gloucester, 1860.

I've heard the Bruce's cloak and clasp  
Was clench'd within their dying grasp.

Enough of this, and, minstrel, hold,  
As minstrel-hire this chain of gold,  
For future lays a fair excuse  
To speak more nobly of the Bruce.

One of Bubb Doddington's maxims was: 'When you have made a good impression, go away.' To all who dislike the illusion-destroying process, we should say, 'When you have *got* a good impression, go away; but keep it for your own private delectation, and beware of generalising on it till it has undergone the ordeal of inquiry.' After all, the greatest sacrifice imposed upon us by critics and commentators like M. Fournier, is the occasional abandonment of an agreeable error, amply compensated by the habits of accuracy and impartiality which they enforce, without which there can be neither hope of improvement for the future nor confidence in the past. They have rather enhanced than depreciated the common stock of recorded or traditional wit, genius, virtue, and heroism; and if the course of treatment to which the reader is subjected sometimes resembles the sudden application of a shower-bath, his moral and intellectual system is similarly braced and invigorated by the shock.



## FREDERIC VON GENTZ.

FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW FOR JANUARY, 1863.

*Aus dem Nachlass VARNHAGEN VON ENSE. Tagebücher von FRIEDRICH VON GENTZ. Mit einem Vor- und Nach-Worte von VARNHAGEN VON ENSE. Leipzig: 1861.*

WE invite attention to the life and writings of Gentz, for reasons widely different from those which commonly induce the analysis of a character or the review of a biography. He is not a specimen of a period, an illustration of a calling, or an example of a class. He is in no sense a representative man. He stands alone in his peculiar and personal description of celebrity; presenting, we believe, the solitary instance of a political aspirant achieving, along with enduring reputation, a position of social equality with statesmen and nobles, in an aristocratic country and under a despotic government, by his pen. He starts with no advantage of birth or fortune, and he never acquires wealth: he produces no work of creative genius: he does not intrigue, cringe, or flatter: he does not get on by patronage: he is profuse without being venal: he is always on the side which he thinks right: yet we find him, almost from the commencement to the very close of his career, the companion and counsellor of the greatest and most distinguished of his contemporaries, the petted member of the most brilliant and exclusive of European circles. In early manhood he had earned the hatred of Napoleon and the friendship of Pitt. In declining age he was at once the trusted friend of Metternich, the correspondent of Mackintosh,

the Platonic adorer of Rahel, and the favoured lover of Fanny Elsler. How often might he have exclaimed—

‘One glorious hour of crowded life  
Is worth an age without a name.’

Excitements and enjoyments of all sorts—from flattered vanity and gratified love to the proud consciousness of European fame and influence—follow each other in rapid succession, or come together thronging with intoxicating intensity. Beyle says of himself that he required three or four cubic feet of new ideas per day, as a steamboat requires coal. What would have been a reasonable allowance for Gentz? How did he win his way to that giddy pinnacle, which was to him—whatever it may seem to cooler heads or less susceptible temperaments—the quintessence of enjoyment, the crowning test and token of success? How or where did he find health, strength, time, mind, or money for the wear and tear of the contest, the lavish pecuniary expenditure and the reckless intellectual waste of the strife?

Speaking of the position won by Sheridan, Moore asserts that ‘by him who has not been born among the great, this can only be achieved by politics. In that arena, which they look upon as their own, the legislature of the land, let a man of genius but assert his supremacy,—at once all barriers of reserve and pride give way, and he takes by right a station at their side which a Shakespeare or a Newton would but have enjoyed by courtesy.’ There was no legislature of the land open to Gentz; and, although he has often been called the Burke of Germany, no fair parallel can be drawn between him and Burke or Sheridan in England, or Thiers and Guizot in France. With rare exception, political writers, as such, have enjoyed no social superiority over the miscellaneous throng of authors in any country: not unfrequently

the precise contrary has been their lot; and when Paul Louis Courier was apostrophised as *Vil Pamphlétaire*, the phrase, he tells us, brought down an accumulated mass of prejudice upon his head. The Augustan age of Anne presents, we believe, the only period of party warfare or civil dissension during which the writer or journalist ranked with the statesman; and the terms on which Swift lived with Oxford and Bolingbroke come nearest to those on which Gentz associated with the leading members of European congresses.

‘The assistance of Swift,’ says Scott, ‘was essential to the existence of the ministry, and ample confidence was the only terms on which it could be procured.’ The assistance of Gentz was essential to the cause of European independence from 1797 to 1815, and eminently useful to the cause of enlightened Conservatism till his death. It was he who clothed in the loftiest and most impressive language the views and principles of those who, with varying fortunes, perseveringly bore up against the sustained and oft-renewed efforts of the French despot to domineer over and humiliate their common fatherland. It was he who suggested the most effective means of making head against the foe: who infused fresh spirit and energy into their counsels when they flagged. We shall see that he was something widely different from the ready penman, clerk, or secretary, who finds apt words for the sense (or nonsense) that may be dictated to him. Being generally present at the preliminary discussions, he was seldom the exponent of a policy which he had not framed or modified, and never of a policy which he disapproved. He is therefore justly and happily termed by Varnhagen, ‘*dieser Schriftsteller-Staatsmann*’ (this writer-statesman).

Perfect equality, if not superiority, is necessarily conceded to a master-mind employed in this fashion;

and Gentz was one of those genial natures that irresistibly attract confidence. He was emphatically what the Neapolitans call *simpatico*; his tone and manner were electrical; and whenever he was brought into contact with men or women of genius and sensibility, a cordial intimacy was the result. Few things are more striking in the 'Remains' of Mrs. Trench than the easy matter-of-course way in which, a day or two after her arrival at a capital or *Residentz*, she becomes a courted inmate of the best houses. Precisely the same problem is suggested by Gentz's diaries; and the solution of it may be found in her recorded impressions when they met at Berlin in 1800, and she finds him 'one of those who seem to impart a portion of their own endowments; for you feel your mind elevated whilst in his society.' There is a freemasonry between highly endowed and highly refined persons which sweeps away at once all thought of social inequality; and if no inferiority is felt on one side, no superiority will be even momentarily assumed upon the other, whatever the domain of intellect in which the purely personal elevation may have been won. The phenomenon is not peculiar to the political horizon.

'Mr. Harley,' says Swift, in the 'Journal to Stella,' 'desired me to dine with him again to-day; but I refused him, for I fell out with him yesterday, and will not see him again till he makes me amends.' The cause of quarrel was the offer of a banknote of fifty pounds, which Swift, who was looking to high Church preferment for his reward, indignantly refused. Gentz, who could be adequately rewarded in no other manner and was never in circumstances to work gratuitously, affected no delicacy in this respect. He took money, right and left, from every one who resorted to his pen, or who benefited, or hoped to benefit, by his services. We shall find him repeatedly

receiving large sums or valuable presents in various shapes, from England, Russia, and France. His private friends, also, were frequently laid under contribution, and Varnhagen introduces the member of a wealthy banking firm giving vent to an illustrative lament over his grave:—‘That was a friend, indeed! I shall never have such another. He has cost me large sums—it would not be believed how large—for he had only to write upon a bill what he wished to have, and he had it instantly; but since he is no longer there, I see, for the first time, what we have lost, and I would give three times as much to call him back to life.’

Alderman Beckford used to say that he lost enormously by speculating on the information he received from Lord Chatham; and it may be doubted whether this accommodating banker was remunerated by intelligence. It is admitted on all hands that Gentz, although especially conversant with financial subjects, never gambled in the funds, and this is one main topic relied on by his apologists. They, moreover, assert with truth that he never, either in writing or speaking, belied his honest convictions; and they plausibly contend that he received in the long run less than many public men of far inferior desert were paid in salaries. They might point to Burke’s pension, or to the income settled on Fox by his dissentient followers, or to the 12,000*l.* raised by private subscription for Pitt. But these great men would, one and all, stand better with posterity if they had never been subjected to pecuniary obligations; and there is an obvious difference between the acceptance of a pension or a loan and an habitual reliance on precarious and irregular supplies. ‘Let all your views in life,’ writes Junius to Woodfall, ‘be directed to a solid, however moderate, independence: without it no man can be happy, nor even honest.’ Gentz remained honest, as this world goes; but his

peace of mind was constantly disturbed by his embarrassments, and, unfounded as it was, he must have writhed under the taunt which Napoleon hurled at him in one of his vengeful bulletins, as a mercenary scribe. There have been men of genius in all ages who could never be taught the true value and proper use of money; taking it carelessly with one hand, and flinging it away as carelessly with the other. They were not more ready to borrow than to give or lend: if they expected other people's purses to be open, their own were open in return—only, unhappily, there was commonly nothing in them. Fielding, Savage, Sheridan, Coleridge, Godwin, and Leigh Hunt are well-known examples of this peculiarity. Gentz was another: and the best that can be said for him is that, not caring for money for its own sake, he lay under little temptation to procure it by unworthy compliances, whilst his unconsciousness of degradation saved him from one of the worst effects of pecuniary obligation, the forfeiture of self-respect.

There is no regular Life of Gentz, nor any complete edition of his writings. A spirited biographical sketch has been supplied by Varnhagen von Ense,<sup>1</sup> who, whilst fully appreciating his genius and making large allowances for his aberrations, obviously differed from him in tastes and habits, as well as in personal and political predilections, and never lived much or intimately with him at any time. He has also been made the subject of many animated attacks, and as animated defences or apologies. To him, indeed, was first applied the description which, with the change of nation, was adopted by O'Connell for himself—that he was the best abused man in Germany. Two editions of his works have been commenced and left incomplete; and a third was planned under auspices which bade fair to render it an enduring monument of his fame.

<sup>1</sup> 'Vermischte Schriften.' Zweiter Theil, 1843.

The Baron Von Prokesch, the present (1863) representative of Austria at the Porte, was from early youth the constant companion and enthusiastic admirer of Gentz, working with him, reading with him, attending political consultations with him, and sharing equally the amusements of his lighter hours and the grave cares of statesmanship. The Baron is a distinguished traveller and author, as well as a highly-accomplished diplomatist, and had every imaginable qualification for what would have been to him a labour of love. He was encouraged to undertake the editorship by Prince Metternich, and was actually engaged in the requisite preparations, when the Austrian Police, or Home Office, interfered, and the design was perforce abandoned.

The materials, had he been permitted the free use of them, would have been abundant, and of the richest quality. On Gentz's death, in pursuance of a well-known German practice, the Austrian Government took possession of the whole of his papers, public and private, which lay within reach of the Officials. Amongst these were many of the day-books, or diaries, which he had kept with scrupulous minuteness from the time when he began to rise into celebrity. Some are now in the possession of his friend, who was so good as to allow us a cursory inspection of them; and the 'Tagebücher,' published by Varnhagen von Ense in 1861, is an abridgment, by Gentz himself, of his diaries from April, 1800, to the end of 1814, and for a few detached weeks of 1819. He burnt the original note-books for these years, after extracting what he thought worth preserving and saw no reason to suppress; and it was his intention, had he lived, to deal in the same manner with the rest. He was fortunately endowed with a proud self-consciousness, and felt that he could afford to be frank. The result is, that many of the entries

preserved by him are confessions and self-communings rather than memoranda of events: he has left their freshness unimpaired; and alternating with literary, political, and social triumphs, appear the frequently-recurring proofs of his weaknesses and his faults.

Frederic Gentz was born in Breslau, May 2, 1764. His father had a situation in the Mint; his mother was an Ancillon. They had four children, and he was the youngest of two sons. His education began at the town school, and on his father's removal to Berlin, as Mint Director, he was sent to a Gymnasium there, and afterwards to the University of Frankfort-on-the-Oder. With the exception of a solitary success in recitation, he showed no sign of talent, spirit, or capacity. His family set him down as a dunce; and the good qualities he was admitted to possess were not of a nature to advance him in the world. He was good-natured, kindhearted, and generous to excess. His sisters got all they wanted from him for the asking, and so, it seems, did his associates; for as regards lending and borrowing, the boy was literally the father of the man. It was not until he attended Kant's lectures at Königsberg, in his twentieth or twenty-first year, that he displayed the least desire of distinction or consciousness of power. Then a sudden change came over him: it was like the breaking up of a frost, or the warming of Pygmalion's statue into life. When he returned to Berlin, in 1785, it was difficult to retrace the indolent, commonplace lad who had been the despair of his parents, in the clever, lively, accomplished, and aspiring young man who was now their pride and their hope. If the first inspiration, however, came from Kant, the great metaphysician did not exercise his usual cloud-compelling influence over his young disciple, whose clear, practical understanding, once unsealed, grappled eagerly with the tangible and useful in knowledge, the refining and elevating in art.



Besides mastering the Greek and Roman classics, he acquired so perfect a knowledge of French as to compose and converse in it as easily as in his native tongue, and a sufficient familiarity with English to enable him to translate Burke.

How and at what particular period he obtained his wonderful familiarity with some English subjects which till recently were imperfectly understood in England, especially our commercial system and our finance, is a puzzle to us. All we know is that his was one of those gifted minds which accumulate treasures whilst they appear to be picking up pebbles or trifling with straws, and can devote night after night, begun in dissipation or frivolity, to hard study or patient investigation. On his arrival in Berlin, one of the most brilliant and popular members of the gay world, attracted by congeniality of tastes and pursuits, introduced him to the best society, in which he speedily became a favourite; and before he had well time to look about him, he was involved in a giddy whirl of what is conventionally called pleasure, besides intrigues or love affairs, which are sad consumers of time. The state of his heart and mind at this epoch may be collected from the earliest of his published letters 'To Elizabeth,' the wife of Councillor Graun during the correspondence, and afterwards of the poet Stageman. At the date of the first, February 12, 1785, she was in her nineteenth year, separated from her husband, very handsome, very clever, and both ready and qualified to condole with young gentlemen suffering from the prevalent malady, which, for want of a fitter term, may be called Wertherism. Its principal symptoms were a morbid craving for excitement, and the treatment of marriage as a kind of legalised slavery—

'Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,  
Spreads its light wings and in a moment flies.'

Marriages made in heaven were understood to supersede those made on earth; i.e. if the mundane did not coincide with and confirm the spiritual tie.

Gentz gave the lady ample occasion for the employment of her powers of soothing; for in less than two years he makes her the confidant of two passions, each of which was to last for ever, and uniformly addresses her with a warmth which might lead unsophisticated readers to suspect that she was all along the object of a third:

‘No, my dear, my beloved friend! Friendships, such as ours was, are not to be reckoned by half years. How willingly I dreamed, in the glad still hours of a sweet enthusiasm, that this life was too short for it,—and now it is to be destroyed in six weeks? Not so. A friend, such as you were, I shall never meet with again in the entire current of my years, and I am to know you in the same world, and yet lost to me. Help me, save me from this hateful doubt.’

Madame Graun is beloved by a gentleman named Le Noble; and Gentz, after urgently pressing on her the moral duty of consulting her adorer’s happiness as well as her own, recommends the careful study of ‘*La Nouvelle Héloïse*’ by way of preparation for the task. He himself, at this time, was paying honourable court to a damsel named Celestine, who, after entering into an engagement with him, backed out; wisely and fortunately enough, for it would have been little less than a miracle for a man with his volatility and impressibility to make a good husband. The experiment was soon afterwards tried by a lady who is briefly described by Varnhagen as *née* Gilly, and it turned out as might have been anticipated. Fletcher, Byron’s favourite servant, naïvely remarked, that every woman could manage my lord, except my lady. Almost every woman was acceptable to Gentz, except his wife. From the domestic arrangements for the meditated

marriage with Celestine, we learn that, with his father's assistance, he hoped to make up an income of 800 dollars. In 1786 he was appointed private secretary to the Royal General-Directorium (whatever that may be), and gave such satisfaction to his superiors that he was speedily promoted to the higher grade of *Kriegsrath* (war-councillor).

Gentz, like Mackintosh and many other men of mark who afterwards became firm opponents of revolutionary opinions, looked hopefully at first on the great events of 1789. But the excesses of democracy, and dread of the military depotism to which they were obviously leading, awoke him from his brief dream of human perfectibility, and his literary career commenced, in 1793, with a translation of Burke's famous 'Essay on the French Revolution.' In 1794 he published a translation, with preface and remarks, of Mallet du Pan's book on the same subject; and in 1795 a translation, with remarks and additions, of a work in the same spirit by Mounier. On the accession of Frederic William III. to the throne of Prussia, in November, 1797, Gentz ventured on the bold and (for a Prussian official) unprecedented step of addressing what he termed a *Sendschreiben* (missive) to his new sovereign on his rights, duties, and opportunities. It is a pamphlet of thirty-two pages, somewhat in the style of Bolingbroke's 'Patriot King.' He was a frequent contributor, as an avowed champion of reaction, to periodicals; and, amongst other articles of note, wrote one which might more properly be denominated an essay against Robespierre and St. Just.

In January, 1795, he founded and edited the *Neue Deutsche Monatschrift* (New German Monthly), which lasted only four months; and in January, 1799, in co-operation with Professor Ancillon, and with funds supplied by a minister, he established the *Historisches Journal*, which was continued monthly till the end of

1800; after which it appeared every three or four months, till its expiration in 1802. His own contributions were mostly of a comprehensive and sustained character, composed with the view of being subsequently republished as books. One series of articles 'On the Origin and Character of the War against the French Revolution,' was composed with express reference to Great Britain; and before the end of the century he had visited England, and formed intimate relations, based on mutual respect and confidence, with (amongst many others) Mackintosh, Lord Grenville, and Pitt. For more than twenty years he remained in constant and confidential communication with the leading members of successive English ministries, who, besides resorting to him for information touching continental matters, made free use of his pen in drawing up papers on English taxation, paper-money, and finance. From 1800 inclusive, we are enabled to track his progress, step by step, in the diaries; and, through the kindness of Baron von Prokesch, we have the additional aid of a note-book, in Gentz's handwriting, entitled, '*Liste générale des Personnes que j'ai vues depuis le commencement de l'année 1800,*' headed by the following 'Observations: '—

'The commencement of the year 1800, or rather the end of 1799, is the epoch at which the sphere of my *liaisons* has rapidly and considerably increased. I had very interesting ones before this epoch, and I propose to form a table of them apart; but it is since 1800 that I have properly begun to figure on the stage of the world, that I have constantly lived with men of all classes, and that society has become one of the principal objects of my occupations, of my studies, and of my enjoyments.'

This list, he explains, does not contain ephemeral, commonplace, or insignificant rencounters or acquaintances: 'it is absolutely meant only to form the base and furnish the elements of a table of social relations

and social commerce, properly so called.' A list of correspondents is added; and the degrees of intimacy are indicated by marks prefixed to the names—a cross expressing familiar acquaintance, and an asterisk intimacy. Headed by the King and Queen, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence, it includes all the personages of note, English and foreign, then resident or sojourning in London.

The published diary begins on the 14th April, 1800, characteristically enough:—

'On the 14th of April an agreeable surprise. The Jew-Elder Hirsch brought me fifty thalers for drawing up I know not what representation. On the 28th of May, received through Baron Brüdener, as a present from the Emperor of Russia, a watch set with (small) brilliants.'

The word (small) before brilliants would seem to show that, in appreciating honorary gifts, he acted on the same principle as Dr. Parr, who, when consulted about the design of a gold ring destined for him, said he cared more for the weight than the form.

The next entry relates to the first English remittance:

'Received a written communication through Garlicke from Lord Grenville, together with a donation of 500*l.* sterling, the first of this kind! (The note of admiration is his own.)

'*February.*—Very remarkable that, on the one side, Lord Carysfort charged me with the translation into French of the published "English Notes against Prussia," and shortly afterwards Count Haugwitz with the translation into German of the "Prussian Notes against England."

'Towards the end of March, finished the book on the "Origin of the Revolutionary War,"<sup>1</sup> and formed the resolution to answer that of Hauterive. This work was undertaken in Schömberg.'

<sup>1</sup> 'Ueber den Ursprung und Character des Krieges gegen die Französische Revolution.' Berlin: 1801. Republished from the *Historisches Journal*.

The work of Hauterive was a semi-official attack on England, and its complete refutation by so masterly and well-informed a writer as Gentz, was a valuable service not merely to the libelled country, but to Europe. It was translated into English, with an able preface, by a gentleman who afterwards became a member of the British Cabinet.<sup>1</sup>

*'April.—Deep emotion at the death of a dog. A proof how strongly everything belonging to domestic ties, amidst all dissipation, affected me. News of the death of the Emperor Paul. Impression which, first the universal joy and later the fearful publication of this news, made on me.'*

His mode of life at this time, in its wild recklessness, resembles that of Savage, who often spent in a night's revelry the borrowed money which should have saved him from privation and annoyance for weeks. Thus, after losing seventy-four louis-d'or at play, Gentz manages with difficulty to raise seventy more by pledging a manuscript, and loses the money the same evening at the same house. In the midst of all these follies, he writes, Nov. 14, 'I resolve to travel to Weimar with my brother Henry, and remain there fourteen days.' He went and spent three weeks there, mostly in the Grand Ducal circle, and, what he valued more, in daily, almost hourly intercourse with Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Wieland, and Kotzebue; whilst flattered vanity, and favoured if not successful love, kept adding to the intoxication and the charm. His enchantress was a young court beauty, Amalie d'Imhoff, who afterwards acquired some celebrity as a poet. On one occasion he writes: 'I passed the morning at Mlle. d'Imhoff's; it was a remarkable morning—hours which I shall remember to my dying day. I never experienced a sensation equal to that which enchanted me this morning. I

<sup>1</sup> 'The State of Europe Before and After the French Revolution.' Being an answer to *L'Etat de la France à la Fin de l'An VIII.* Translated by John Charles Herries, Esq.: 1802.

even fancied I saw approaching the moment of a great internal revolution.' On another: 'I read and wrote till eleven. I then went to Mlle. d'Imhoff's, where I again enjoyed all that is fine, pure, and grand in the commerce of mankind.'

This visit to Weimar having revealed to him how much elevated and improving pleasure may be derived from the intellect and imagination, apart from the indulgence of the senses, he forms some excellent resolutions, which are forgotten almost immediately after his return to the scene of his repented errors.

'Effect of the resolutions at Weimar. On the 25th of December I lost all I had at hazard, so I was obliged to run about the whole of the following day to raise a few dollars for Christmas presents. On the 1st of January (1803), I sup and play at one Buisson's, go home about one, *but forget the house-key, and pass the night elsewhere*. I could not help noting down that, after the resolution of December, it was an odd enough manner of beginning the new year. Yet I went on writing letters of from six to eight sheets each to Amalie Imhoff.

'On the 26th of January I meet, at Mlle. Levin's, Mlle. Eigensatz, and she pleases me.'

Christel Eigensatz was an actress of considerable personal attractions: his brief acquaintance with her formed the same sort of episode in his principal love affair as the adventure of Tom Jones with Mrs. Waters formed in *his*; and the fair Amalie probably resented it in the same manner as Sophia. In February he received a 'tolerably large' remittance through Lord Carysfort.

'February 21.—As I returned home, about two in the morning, I found a letter from my wife, which "has decided the fate of my life." And the next day our resolution was taken probably to separate. This, however, did not prevent me from going to a ball at Ponstat's to play *trente-et-quarante*, &c.

'April 5.—Is it credible? The most urgent, the most sensible of my miseries was the impossibility of making a

present to Christel, who had her benefit to-day. *And, on the same day, fate wafts to the wretch who could write this down a remittance of a thousand pounds from England.'*

Well might he exclaim, as he does in a subsequent entry, 'Maintenant c'est le délire complet !' He had just self-command and discretion enough to see that such a life must be broken off at any price ; and he came suddenly to the resolution of leaving Berlin, with all its ties, regular and irregular ; a resolution doubtless precipitated by the pressure of his debts, the remonstrances of his family, and the (not always) mute reproaches of his wife. With some difficulty, he obtained leave of absence, having not yet thrown up his employments ; and on the 19th of May he writes : ' I take leave of my wife ; and on the 20th, at three, I leave Berlin with Adam Müller, never to see it again.'

The biography of men of letters teems with examples of similar incapacity to resist temptation : and one of them, himself deeply culpable, emphatically proclaims, as one of the worst effects of illicit passion :

' I wave the quantum of the sin,  
The hazard o' concealing,  
But, oh ! it hardens all within,  
And petrifies the feeling.'

The disorders of his life did not deaden the sensibilities or cloud the intellect of Gentz : and one reason was that he never for a moment shut his eyes to the true nature and tendency of his conduct, nor lost his relish for purifying studies and companionship. Our readers will readily recall the scene where Charles Fox, after sitting up all night at Brooks', and losing all he had at hazard, is found the next morning quietly reading Euripides. Gentz, in similar circumstances, could turn with equal ease and gratification to a favourite classic, or speculate with Adam Müller on those sublime mysteries which puzzled Milton's angels. Nor does he appear to have



ceased gaining fame and money as a writer at the period when his phrenzied pursuit of excitement was most likely to interfere with his literary labours.

His abandonment of the Prussian service and his naturalisation in Austria, were the gradual and unforeseen result of circumstances. He was neither lured by promises nor fettered by pledges, when, six weeks after his departure from Berlin with Müller, he arrived in Vienna with Froberg, a companion of a widely different cast of mind ; for they played piquet all the way from Iglau :—

‘ I myself (he says) do not know the precise history of my settlement in Vienna. The inconceivable meagreness of the journal leaves me in doubt. It seems that on the one hand Landriani (through Colloredo and Cobentzl), on the other Fasbender, had a hand in it. The latter persuaded me, the very day he presented me to the Archduke Charles, to write a kind of memoir, offering my services,—the only positive step I ever took. The fate of this memoir is unknown to me. After ten or twelve days, I am taken by Colloredo to an audience with the emperor, who, I distinctly remember, showed no desire to take me into his service. Nevertheless, five days afterwards (Sept. 6th), Cobentzl sent for me, and informed me that the emperor engaged me as counsellor (*Rath*), with a salary of 5,000 Gulden (about 200*l.*).’

In another man, we should be apt to term this ignorance of the turning point of his life affected ; but Gentz was so thoroughly the slave of the moment, so prone to let one range of feelings or impressions absorb or replace another, that imperfect recollection or entire forgetfulness of past events, simply because they were past, was natural to him ; and the correspondence relating to the transactions in question is so honourable to him, that he could have had no imaginable motive for suppressing it. The communication of the 6th having been put into official shape, he addressed a manly and eloquent letter to the King of Prussia, requesting not merely his discharge, but some gracious expressions of

a nature to repel reproach. The discharge was granted and was accompanied by an assurance that His Majesty 'in reference to his merits as a writer, coincided in the general approbation which he had so honourably acquired by them.'

One of the charges subsequently brought against Gentz was, that he had bartered 'the young, aspiring Prussia, with its pregnant future,' against 'superannuated, saintish, Romish-imperial Austria.' Admitting (what we should be slow to admit) that Prussia came up to this description as regards her internal policy at any time, her external policy was then to the last degree vacillating and devoid of high principle. She soon afterwards became the complacent ally of France and condescended to accept Hanover for her subserviency. What would have been the position of Gentz had he remained in her service? He must have laid aside his pen altogether or have used it to palliate a course of public conduct which he reprobated and despised. This dilemma he evidently foresaw; and the more or less of liberality discoverable in the domestic administration of Prussia is nothing to the point. What he saw and preferred in Austria was the firm friend of constitutional England and the determined enemy of revolutionary France. The Austrian statesmen with whom he co-operated were those who successively presided over the department of foreign affairs, and it will be seen that the cordiality of his co-operation was uniformly proportioned to their increasing or diminishing hostility to his own arch foe, Napoleon. Moreover, before Gentz can fairly be made responsible for the despotic and reactionary character of the Imperial *régime*, it should be shown that the ministers he was supposed to influence had power to modify it; the truth being that the home policy of Austria was under the guidance of a totally different set of men from those whose names are familiarly known to Europe as representing her in foreign

courts and congresses. Referring to this particular period, he sets down:—

‘What more I did at this time, how I meant to live, how I had lived till then, all is now a mystery to me. In Dresden I mixed as usual with the fashionable world, with Metternich, Elliot, and other people of distinction; and, quite casually, Elliot proposed to me on the 26th to travel with him to England. So far as I recollect, Metternich gave me a bill on England for 100*l.*, and Armfeldt, from whom the evening before I had won 200 dollars, a similar one. On the 1st of October I travelled alone from Dresden to Weimar. There I lose forty louis d’ors to the Duke; send my servant with an endless quantity of letters to Berlin, and wait for Elliot, who arrives punctually on the 6th.’

Mr. Elliot, whose witty replies to Frederick the Great have won him a permanent place in the annals of diplomacy, was then English minister at Dresden.<sup>1</sup> All we learn of their journey is that Gentz was ‘auf’s ausserste tyrannisirt’ (excessively tyrannised over) by his companion; which perhaps was the best thing that could happen to a traveller of his wavering mood, ever ready to linger on the road or step aside to gather flowers. The list of distinguished persons by whom he was received in England shows that he turned his visit to good account; and the late Mr. T. Grenville is reported to have called him the best talker he ever heard; adding: ‘I had known Gentz intimately at Berlin. When he came to England he immediately called on me, and earnestly desired to be made personally acquainted with Fox, my brother Lord Grenville, and the other great men of the day. Accordingly I asked them to dinner with him. They came, and were so charmed with the Prussian statesman that they declared they should be most happy to dine with

<sup>1</sup> The career of this remarkable man has since been made familiar by an interesting *Memoir of The Right Hon. Hugh Elliot*. By the Countess of Minto. 1868. The repartees attributed to him are discussed in *The Quarterly Review* for October, 1868, pp. 349–350.

him again at my house the very next day.' Yet between Fox and Gentz there was no bond of sympathy besides that which almost invariably exists between superior men of all parties. Whilst in England he received a letter from Count Stadion, hastening his return on grounds shrewdly divined and pointedly stated :—

'So far as I can see, people are behaving very well towards you here (Vienna). They tell me that the terms in which the King has granted your discharge are very satisfactory; and there is much less clamour and gossip about you than I apprehended. It is not in the first moment of your settlement in Vienna that the mines will be sprung against you. Jealousy and envy commonly reason too well to discharge their shafts at the time when all the *éclat* of your reputation, and all the pleasure of having gained you to our interests, would serve you as a buckler. It is later, when people have got accustomed to see you every day, to observe you *en robe de chambre*, that you must be on your guard. It is then that those who wish to injure you will have found your weak and your strong side, and tried to set their machinations at work.'

He still lingered, and passed some weeks on his return at Weimar and Dresden, as if instinctively apprehensive of his reception at Vienna; where he finds, on arriving, that his time had not yet come, the Imperial policy being in too wavering a condition to need a counsellor, coadjutor, or penman of his positive ways of thinking and unyielding temper. 'My first interview with Count Cobentzl, and especially with Collenbach, might have shown me that the stage of genuine activity was not yet open to me. I was certainly treated with great respect, but at the same time with mistrust and jealousy; and, in reality, men like these could not well act otherwise towards me.' In the meantime he mixed much in society, and went on forming new and valuable acquaintance. 'Almost the only thing,' he says, 'which I then carried on with

eagerness, was my correspondence with England, particularly with Vansittart.' This led to his forming a close intimacy with Sir Arthur Paget, a congenial spirit in many ways, of whom we consequently hear a great deal not always to the credit of the pair, whose common subjects of interest were play and gallantry much oftener than diplomacy or politics.<sup>1</sup> At Paget's he met Le Maistre :

'Wonderful is it that this fact was first brought back to my recollection by my old diary. The circumstance that I had seen this great man had entirely escaped my memory ; so little impression had he then made upon me. How did that come to pass ? I must, however, have held him very high as the author of the *Considérations sur la Révolution*. Was I spoilt by the every day life of great circles, or too surfeited with diplomatic prattle ?'

Another memorable acquaintance was Lord Brougham, who came to Vienna in December, 1804, and, although he had not yet entered Parliament, was rapidly rising into fame. 'Brougham came to Vienna, and sought me with much interest. I did not like his cynical nature, but I could not resist his originality, his understanding, and his eloquence. We saw each other almost daily. I took him, little formed as he was for good society, to Paget's, where at the first party, (*à propos* of a conversation with A'Court at Naples), he behaved so improperly that we were obliged to give him up.'

About this time Gentz wrote a memoir, addressed to Cobentzl, to prove that the Austrian Cabinet ought not to recognise the Imperial title assumed by Bonaparte. This led to a correspondence with Louis XVIII.,

<sup>1</sup> In the later editions of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* is this couplet :—

'Here's Powell's pistol ready for your life,  
And kinder still *two* Pagets for your wife.'

Sir Arthur was one of the two intended. The affair which won him his immortality is mentioned by Gentz.

from whom he received several autograph letters. In another tract against Napoleon, he had so far counteracted the views of the ministry as to be regarded as their opponent; and when, towards the end of August, 1805, war became inevitable, he was left in complete ignorance of all that was going on behind the scenes, and had good reason to dread an entire loss of influence and consideration as the result:—

‘It was a fatal epoch. Had I only in June conducted myself with more calmness and prudence towards Wintzingerode, who came to Vienna on the part of Russia to make provision for the joint war, and was ready to grant me his full confidence, I had still been able to effect an honourable retreat and do much good. But I fell from one mistake into another.’

His mistakes mattered nothing. Whenever the spirit of revolutionary despotism, embodied in Napoleon, was to be encountered in right earnest, on sound principles, and with broad, unselfish, truly elevated views, his co-operation was universally felt to be indispensable. There was not another pen in Germany, nor perhaps in Europe, that could give equal force to the combined protest of insulted sovereigns and suppressed nationalities, or fling an equal halo round their cause. He was as sure to be called for in the emergency as the popular commander by whom the armies were to be led; and we were not at all surprised to read, directly after the last burst of despondency:—

‘On the 14th of September a grand reconciliation took place between me and Count Cobentzl. I now resolved to take up the pen for Austria, and sketched the plan of a work on the balance of power. To carry out this plan, which Cobentzl highly approved, I immediately settled down in my old summer residence at Hietzing, where I satisfactorily completed several sections.’

He was simultaneously employed in putting the finishing touch to his work on the ‘War between

Spain and England,' which was published in 1806, and contributed largely to turn European opinion in favour of England. His labours were suddenly and unpleasantly interrupted by the near approach of the French army.

'On the 7th of November Count Cobentzl revealed to me, with bitter tears, that it was time to leave Vienna. Count Fries, who had often stood my friend, and Fasbender, helped me to put my money matters in order so far as practicable, and on the evening of the 8th, at the same time with Fasbender, and in his carriage, I left Vienna, and on the 10th arrived with Paget and other fugitives at Brünn.'

The news of the battle of Austerlitz reached them at Troppau on the 4th of December, and they hurried off to Breslau; but on the 4th of January we find him at Dresden, contracting with a bookseller for the publication of the two books on which he was principally employed; for that they did not absorb his whole time appears from a subsequent entry, to the effect that he had been working hard at his manuscripts and on memoirs for London.

'On the 8th of February,' he adds, 'at a dinner at Wynne's, the English Minister, we received the news of Pitt's death. Curious that, notwithstanding my grief at this event, I did not regard the composition of the new (Fox-Grenville) ministry with unfavourable eyes; I rather promised myself great results from it.'

On the 16th of April he finished the introduction to his 'Fragments upon the Balance of Power in Europe,' and to his entire satisfaction:

'This introduction, as regards power, fulness, and beauty of style, is indisputably the best piece on the larger scale that I have ever written for the public. I read at this time daily, and often many hours of the night, in the Bible, deeply captivated by this reading.'

To his biblical reading may be traced much of the

high-wrought energy, the lofty spirit of self-sacrifice, the contempt for present evils, and the richness of imagery, which distinguished this production. It was undertaken to promote a hopeful enterprise: the completed parts of it were published to counteract the demoralising influences of ill success. Like the political tracts of Burke, it abounds in passages of universal and permanent application.

This work was sent to Mackintosh, then at Bombay, with a letter describing the state of events after the peace of Presburg. The reply begins thus :—

‘I received your letter of the 6th of May. I have read it fifty times since with the same sentiment which a Roman, at the extremity of Mauritania, would probably have felt if he had received an account of the ruin of his country, written the morning after the battle of Pharsalia, with all the unconquerable spirit of Cato and the terrible energy of Tacitus. He would have exulted that there was something Cæsar could not subdue, and from which a deliverer and an avenger might yet spring. . . . I received by the same mail your two precious packets. I assent to all you say, sympathise with all you feel, and admire equally your reason and your eloquence throughout your masterly fragment.’

On the 7th of October, Gentz wrote to von Hammer, the historian :

‘The question is no longer about certain provinces, nor the political equilibrium, but the individual safety of every one is at stake. You will know the sentence against Palm. Berthier says he has orders to shoot whoever should read writings such as those of Arndt, Gentz, &c. The internecine war against opinion, the extinction of thought, is in the Order of the day.’

In December, 1806, Palm, a bookseller of Nuremberg, was tried by court-martial for exciting to insurrection by the circulation of libels against Napoleon, condemned and shot. Gentz’s last work was one of the alleged libels, and probably the most irritating ;



but the sentence was general, and he cannot be fairly charged with being even the innocent and unconscious cause of this atrocity.<sup>1</sup>

The book was also sent to Stadion and the Emperor, and called forth letters from each which determined him to return to Vienna. Shortly afterwards he received a letter from Prince Czartoriski with a ring (worth from 1,200 to 1,500 dollars) from the Emperor Alexander; a present which gratified him the less because he had just heard of the peace between France and Russia, the treaty of M. d'Oubril, which the Emperor subsequently refused to ratify. His retirement from the Prussian service had in no respect impaired his reputation or authority with Prussian princes and statesmen; and we find the most distinguished of them repairing to him for counsel and aid as soon as they had reason to anticipate a breach with France. Stein has long conferences with him: Prince Louis carries him off to a grand hunting party given by Prince Lobkowitz at Eisenberg, where the coming crisis is discussed; and on the 30th of September arrives General Phüll with a letter from Count Haugwitz, then at the head of affairs in Prussia, inviting him to the Prussian head-quarters at Naumburg. He arrived there on the 3rd of October, and formed part of the royal and ministerial suite till the 17th; a brief interval pregnant with momentous events, which he has minutely and scrupulously recorded in one of the most remark-

<sup>1</sup> 'The pamphlet was entitled "*L'Allemagne dans son Abaissement*," and was attributed to the pen of M. Gentz. Palm was offered his pardon upon condition that he gave up the author of the work, which he refused to do.' (Scott's '*Life of Napoleon*,' ch. xxxiv. note.) All Gentz's tracts were avowed and notorious, and '*L'Allemagne*,' &c., was not by him. Sir Archibald Alison mentions the '*Fragments upon the Balance of Power*,' as one of *two* specially inculpated. At a dinner given by an eminent publisher, Thomas Campbell rose and, on the part of the authors present, proposed '*Napoleon Buonaparte*.' 'Why are we to drink his health?' asked the astonished host. 'Because he shot a bookseller.'

able historical documents now extant.<sup>1</sup> It contains a complete exposure of the unparalleled folly, corruption, and incapacity of the Prussian ministers and generals, who managed to fix upon the very worst time for commencing hostilities, and the very worst mode of conducting them.

As usual, Prussia missed her opportunity of throwing a decisive weight into the scale. She hesitated till the Austrians had been beaten at Austerlitz, and compelled to sign peace at Presburg; and then, with England alienated by her acceptance of Hanover and Russia uncertain, she defied Napoleon, who made short work of her at Jena. Gentz's narrative leaves us in doubt whether her policy, if it merits the name, was owing to the King's weakness or the corruption of his advisers. Haugwitz laboured hard to prove that the war was rendered inevitable by the national feeling shared and encouraged by the Queen and Prince Louis, and that the ruinous delay was owing to the almost invincible repugnance of the king. The grand object was to reconcile the late subserviency to France with this sudden display of offended dignity; and for this purpose the first pen in Germany was to be secured. 'The object for which I wished to see you,' says Haugwitz to Gentz, 'is the most important it is possible to imagine; it is the interest and success of our enterprise. You cannot, must not quit us. Besides, I answer for everything. I know that they will be content in Vienna with what you will do here. Never will you have done a more essential service to the general cause. I will take care of your horses, of your lodging, of everything.'

The service for which he was especially wanted was to revise the King's letter to Napoleon and the war

<sup>1</sup> 'Journal de ce qui m'est arrivé de plus marquant dans le Voyage que j'ai fait au Quartier-Général de S.M. le Roi de Prusse,' &c. It was not printed in a complete form till 1841.

manifesto prepared by Lombard, who, with some difficulty, is persuaded to make important changes in both.

‘When the task of revision was completed, Lombard told me that the King was extremely anxious for the publication of this manifesto; that he was unwilling to draw the sword without a declaration of the motives, and that I should do them a great service by hastening the translation as much as possible. I undertook it on my return to my lodgings, and, having devoted the whole night to it, finished it by eight in the morning (Oct. 7th). I saw this morning a number of persons, and especially a great number of officers of the royal suite. I can aver with perfect truth that every man I met in the streets addressed me with nearly the same compliment: “You are here. God be praised! This time, then, we shall not be deceived.” On reflecting on all that was fatal in a situation where such guarantees were needed to calm distrust and fear, I began at the same time to suspect that the effect produced by my presence might well have been the principal motive in inviting me. Many things I have observed since have confirmed me in this opinion.’

At all events, they were determined to get as much work as they could out of him: for the next day, after dinner, Haugwitz requested him, in the King’s name, to draw up a proclamation to the army, on the subject and character of the war; another addressed to the Prussian public in the same sense: and (what naturally struck him as odd) a prayer to be recited in the churches.

In noticing the letter, Napoleon spoke of it as a wretched pamphlet, such as England engaged hireling authors to compose at the rate of 500*l.* a year, adding, ‘I am sorry for my brother, who does not understand the French language, and has certainly never read that rhapsody.’ He also made light of the manifesto; but that a good deal of his indifference on this score was affected, is betrayed by the tone in which he assailed the reputed author in his bulletins. Edged in between bitter sarcasms levelled at the Queen, we find a state-

ment that public indignation is at its height against the authors of the war, especially Her Majesty and 'a wretched scribe named Gentz, one of those men without honour who sell themselves for money.'<sup>1</sup>

He received no remuneration in any shape for his services on that occasion; and to be calumniated in such company was a distinction of which he had good reason to be proud. At the same time it was a serious matter for either man or woman to have this kind of mark set upon them. Gibbon winds up the third chapter of his history with some striking reflections on the wide-spread and far-reaching tyranny of the Cæsars. 'To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. "Wherever you are," wrote Cicero to Marcellus, "remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror."' A similar train of reflection was suggested by the prostrate condition of the Continent when Napoleon's power was at its culminating point, and the selected objects of his vindictiveness, with the fate of the Duc d'Enghien before their eyes, were shunned or warned off by neutral or friendly territories, as the wounded stag is expelled or avoided by the herd. Madame de Staël had to make a long and perilous circuit to reach a precarious resting-place,<sup>2</sup> and Gentz, a sworn servant of the House of Hapsburg, was told to keep aloof from their capital for fear of compromising them :

'As they would not have me in Vienna, since Napoleon had assailed me in the most violent terms in his Berlin bulletins, I travelled on the 12th of November to Prague,

<sup>1</sup> 'Miserable scribe, nommé Gentz, un de ces hommes sans honneur qui se vendent pour de l'argent.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Certes, on ne pouvait s'empêcher de le penser, l'Europe, jadis si facilement ouverte à tous les voyageurs, est devenue sous l'influence de l'Empereur Napoléon comme un grand filet qui vous enlance à chaque pas. . . . La géographie de l'Europe, telle que Napoléon l'a faite, s'apprend que trop bien par le malheur. Les détours qu'il fallait prendre pour éviter sa puissance étaient déjà près de deux mille lieues, et maintenant, en partant de Vienne même, j'étais réduite à emprunter le territoire asiatique pour y échapper.' — *Dix Ans d'Exil*.

and settled down in a wretched quarter there. I was so poor, that a loan of 400 paper florins from one Remboldt, Dietrichstein's secretary, was of the greatest moment to me. What further was to become of me I knew not. Every journal brought the worst news of the progress of the French, the entire separation of England from the Continent,' &c., &c.

This, if a strange, is by no means a dishonourable position for a man who had just been held up to public contempt by an emperor for selling his pen to princes; nor was he more than temporarily depressed by it:

'I was, notwithstanding, almost always in the finest tone of mind; passed the livelong day in the best company; and at this very time awoke in me the last passion which has chained me to a woman. The Duchess of Acerenza, born Princess of Courland, was the object. This passion arose soon after my arrival in Prague, where I spent nearly every evening with the Princess, at the pleasantest house in the town. In the month of December it rose to a pitch of wildness, of which my journal has retained the most remarkable traces in letters of fire. I wrote to Adam Müller: "The charms of this woman made me completely forget that there were a sun and stars beyond the heights round Prague." Yet there was a certain independence and power in this with outward circumstances so strangely contrasting madness.'

Exciting times, stirring events, great risks run and great things performed or attempted, warm the blood, kindle the imagination, increase sensibility, encourage enterprise, and breathe hope. Whatever the cause, the secret history of revolutionary times is full of passions, intrigues, and amatory adventures, which apparently absorb the thoughts and interests of the self-same actors and actresses who are simultaneously playing the leading parts in courts and camps before the world:—

'Pour mériter son cœur, pour plaire à ses beaux yeux,  
J'ai fait la guerre aux rois, je l'aurois faite aux Dieux.'

All revolutionary periods more or less resemble the Fronde in this respect; and there is truth in the concluding remark of Gentz, that the capacity for a concentration of feeling in agitating and distracting circumstances shows power.

‘1807.—The beginning of this year was distinguished by my mad passion for Joanna of Courland. It was first, after a short duration, interrupted by an adventurous journey to Nachod, where I off my own hand (*auf eigene Faust*) treated with Count Götzen for the provisional occupation of the Prusso-Silesian fortresses by Austrian troops. (This occurred from the 10th to the 17th of January.) On my return, I found all changed; Wallmoden in possession; my folly rewarded as it deserved. Still the oscillations of the passions lasted far into March, when (with Mohrenheim’s help) they finally ceased. The descriptions are curious, but could not be preserved.’

About this time he received 500 louis from Adair, the English Minister at Vienna, and, ‘rather unexpectedly, 500 ducats, with a ring in brilliants worth 400, from Prince Czartoriski,’ on the part of Russia. In June another 500 louis from England, and in July we find him with horses, carriages and cook, sunk in endless enjoyments and frivolities with the Princess Bagration, the Duchess of Weimar, the Duke of Coburg, and the whole fine world of Carlsbad, where the news of the Treaty of Tilsit had just arrived. But with him dissipation never implies idleness. He is constantly occupied with what he calls the higher politics, although in the spring he complains that they were slippery ground for him. He did not wish to break with Russia: he could not break with Austria; and both, owing to the ‘mis-screwed’ condition of the world, were on warlike terms with England. He, however, wrote and addressed to Canning a strong memoir on the Russian war-manifesto, which he had cause to believe was well received; and in May, 1808, the Duke of Portland, his particular friend, being then

at the head of the ministry, a considerable credit was opened to him in England, which at once relieved him from all pressing cares. He then goes to Töplitz, intending to spend the summer there :

‘There I immediately made the acquaintance of Madame de Staël, who was travelling in North Germany with August Wilhelm Schlegel and Sismondi ; and, few other visitors having arrived, I passed several remarkable days with her : accompanied her to Pirna,—for I dared not enter Dresden—and suffered myself to be deeply fascinated by her clever flatteries, which at length assumed a really passionate character and awoke the jealousy of her two companions. She wrote to Vienna, where she had passed the winter, that I was the first man of Germany.’

Madame de Staël was quite as anxious to please as a woman as a wit, and in her advances to celebrated men with a turn for gallantry, she did not leave the impression that her speculations on the passions were limited to the Platonic theory. Gentz’s political celebrity and social successes, his glow and flow of mind, his lofty defiance of their common foe, and his professed admiration for her genius, were sure to captivate her ; nor was it at all surprising that her learned companions were thrown into the shade. She partially agreed with Byron :—

‘I hate your authors, who ’re all author,—fellows  
In foolscap uniform turned up with ink.’

Schlegel, although the vainest of mortals, was trained to drop into the background when she was amusing herself in this fashion, and, much to his disgust, was universally regarded as the original of the humble friend and complacent admirer in ‘Corinne.’ In a letter to Rahel, June, 1814, Gentz makes a most ungrateful return for Madame de Staël’s flattering attentions, and speaks slightly of the political part of her book on Germany :—

‘It contains some remarkable and admirably-written

chapters on German literature. All the rest is dished-up rubbish. What does so disgusting an egotist, who refers everything to *les peines de cœur*, that is, to the wretched history of her (deservedly) unsuccessful love-trials—what does or can she know about nations, or, for that matter, about individuals, when it is not revealed to her as in these chapters by a sort of inspiration? She set to once, and in right earnest, making love to me: it was in 1808. Out of mere vanity, I then compelled myself to cultivate her. She subsequently became unbearable to me. In 1813, she wrote me some foolish and withal insolent letters from Stockholm, of a political cast. I answered her coldly and slightly. Thereupon she got wild, and has since talked of me in England as one who deserved worse than hanging. A certain power of execution cannot be denied to this lady: were she other than she is, and knew how to write so, she might become great. But since none, even with the highest so-called talent, can express anything greater than is in them, in her best compositions she produces only emphatic chatter. I regard Châteaubriand as the manikin of her species.'

Had matters been carried a little farther, we might have had another *Elle et Lui* and *Lui et Elle* scandal. If, as is generally supposed, she was the heroine of Benjamin Constant's 'Adolphe,' she was not easily rebuffed or wearied out; and we find her again inviting the attentions of Gentz in 1815:

'It is very kind of you to promise me a day to compensate me for that which deprives me of the Duke of Wellington. Would Friday suit you? and will you be so kind as to inform M. de Humboldt of your decision? We should be too numerous, if I brought together all those of my friends who are ambitious to make your acquaintance; and you will prefer conversing *en petit comité*.'

On the 18th of February, 1809, Gentz received a letter from Count Stadion recalling him to Vienna. He arrived there on the 21st, and the same evening had a long conference with the minister. The war was decided, and he was immediately set to work on the



manifesto, which was completed on the 30th of March, and warmly commended. The same day he began the translation of it into French. The Austrians had their usual luck; on the 13th of May their capital was again occupied by the French; and Gentz was once more a fugitive in strangely mixed, highly distinguished, and extremely interesting society, by which he was courted and flattered to the top of his bent. From his notes of what passed at head-quarters and about the Court, it would appear that the person chiefly to blame for this fresh catastrophe was the Emperor (Francis I. of Austria), who was constantly imposing his confined views and obstinate will on his counsellors, no matter what their standing, reputation, or apparent independence of control. It has been truly and pointedly remarked, that during his long reign—from 1792 to 1835—he was what George III. would have been without a Parliament. Stadion complained to Gentz in the bitterest terms of the manner in which he had been forced to act against his confirmed convictions, and then made responsible for the very policy he had deprecated. Whilst the question of the continuation of the war was still pending, he refused to be compromised any further, and (September 26th) handed over the portfolio of foreign affairs to Metternich, who remarked on accepting it, ‘This is the third time we make peace in the midst of a ministerial interregnum, whilst Bonaparte changes neither system nor instruments, and pursues his course without a jar.’ A day or two before, Gentz wrote to a correspondent:—

‘If you ask me who is minister for foreign affairs, I should be puzzled to tell you, though I pass my life with the two men between whom he must be sought. There are moments when one would be thought to be; moments when the other; moments when neither; moments, again, when both; moments, lastly, when nobody. This is the exact truth. Neither Metternich nor Stadion knows who has actually drawn up the credentials of Lichtenstein!’

The scene of these events was Dotis ; and great allowance must be made for the terrible position of the Imperial family, stunned and confounded by disaster and defeat. Till compelled to take part in their distracted counsels, Gentz bore his exile philosophically enough. At Havart, in Hungary, a wretched place, which he thought safer than Buda or Pesth, he says:— 'I lived almost exclusively with Sallust, Tacitus, Seneca, and Lucretius. By accident, the posthumous historical work of Fox fell in my way, which I read and commented with great indignation.' There also he began a translation of 'Burke's Letters on a Regicide Peace.'

At a long subsequent period, when the Emperor Francis, who never much liked Gentz, was induced by a sense of his services to offer him a higher title, he refused, saying, he was content to be called the friend of Metternich. It is, therefore, curious to mark from what slender, and even adverse, beginnings this prized and cherished friendship sprang. When Metternich's appointment was confirmed, Gentz resolved to leave Dotis, saying:—

'I shall never pardon him the indifference and levity with which he sees Count Stadion depart, and the confidence, truly shocking, with which he undertakes so terrible a task as that of the direction of affairs at this moment. I will not even nourish the suspicion that he has contributed in any manner to this scandalous reverse of Stadion: his ostensible conduct is enough.'

He afterwards fully acquits Metternich of this imputation, which was clearly unfounded ; nor does any ground appear for Metternich's refusal which would not have been equally applicable to any other attached servant of the monarchy. Gentz's opinion becomes more favourable on hearing Metternich's own defence of his conduct, and he comes round altogether after a long conversation on finance:—

‘He (M.) is decidedly opposed to the idea of meddling with ecclesiastical property. He has developed to me in this respect very sound and very respectable principles : he is persuaded that all the moral strength of the Austrian monarchy is to be found in its being regarded by the world as the centre and rallying point of all that is left of ancient principles, of ancient forms, of ancient sentiments ; and that it is this idea which, so long as it can be maintained, will always give a large number of powerful allies to Austria. This conversation has entirely reconciled me to Metternich, against whom I had great complaints at the epoch of the peace.’

It is certainly a plausible defence of the reactionary policy for which Metternich, justly or unjustly, has been made responsible. ‘It is not possible,’ remarks Gentz, soon afterwards, ‘that the defects of his character should altogether spoil the just and wise views with which he starts for Paris.’ In summing up the constitution and prospects of the government at the end of 1810, he says :—

‘Foreign affairs are not absolutely bad in the hands of Count Metternich. He thinks himself fortunate : this is an excellent quality. He has resources ; he has *savoir-faire* ; he does not spare himself personally. But he is frivolous, dissipated, and presumptuous. If his star seconds him during some years, he can take and give the state a very suitable position. But beware of new crises. They will overthrow him ; and (thanks to the radical view) he is as difficult to replace as Count O’Donnell.’

On the 23rd of June, 1810, Gentz records, with allowable complacency, his reception at Töplitz by the Empress, the Emperor’s third wife, who, amongst other flattering speeches, said, coupling him with Goethe of whom she had just before seen a good deal at Carlsbad, ‘It is not given to all to write like you, and yet be able to talk so clearly and naturally with every one.’

‘In the following August arrives the Princess of Solms, afterwards Duchess of Cumberland, to my taste, the most

beautiful woman my eyes ever alighted on, in everybody's opinion one of the most amiable. She was now the sun towards which my gaze was directed. . . . To this day (after sixteen years) my soul swells when I think of this duchess, and the goodwill with which she rewarded my honest homage I still reckon as one of the fairest adornments of my life.'

Currency and maritime laws were the subjects, uncongenial as they may be thought, with which he occupied the hours not devoted to high-born beauty ; and he treated both in a manner to command great weight and attention, if not universal approval, for his views. He drew up several papers on finance for the English ministry, who, considering probably that whatever they paid for was their own, quietly took credit for his reasonings and researches. Not so the Austrian financiers, who openly consulted him as the highest authority in this branch of domestic policy, and, so far as the pecuniary embarrassments of the empire permitted, attempted to carry out his principles.

We now pass on to the autumn of 1813, to the eve of one of those emergencies which invariably summoned Gentz from the library or the drawing-room, like Cincinnatus from the plough. War was in the wind ; and he was wanted for the manifesto, which, having had early notice from Metternich of the probability of its being needed, he had completed on the 11th of August : war having been declared on the 10th at midnight.

It was read over and settled on the very evening of its completion, and published on the 17th. In token of the general approval, the Emperor Alexander, who arrived at Prague on the 15th, presented him with a diamond ring, the fourth or fifth he had received from the Russian Emperor, who had a peculiar fancy for giving rings. Here he breaks out in a strain which contrasts strikingly with his review of his position at

Vienna in 1811, when, partly owing to ill-health and partly to the marriage of Maria Louisa and Napoleon, he was sunk in the lowest depths of despondency :

‘ My position in Prague was one of the pleasantest and most interesting imaginable. I was now for several months the medium of all-important political relations between Vienna and head-quarters, the channel of all authentic news, the middle point of all diplomatists and all diplomacy. All went as I could wish : my health had become excellent, my name great. I had more money than enough.’

The women then played an important part in public life, as they always must where the conduct of affairs is withdrawn from popular control and vested in individuals, whether princes, priests, ministers or generals ; and he says he must fairly own that he ‘ learnt a great deal from the quick-sighted and intriguing Princess Bagration, the enthusiastic but excellent Countess Wrba, and the restless but clear-seeing Duchess of Sagan.’<sup>1</sup>

On the 22nd of October, the news of the battle of Leipsic, which had reached Prague the day before, was confirmed, and Gentz had the pleasing duty of ordering the illumination of the town, and the celebration of the *Te Deum*, according to the laudable practice of Christian and Catholic conquerors :—

‘ It was a glorious moment for me. That for which I had fought for twenty years seemed at last to keep the upper hand. Circumstances made me one of the first organs which announced this great reverse of fortune ; and the fall of the sovereignty of the world, and of the man who stood at its head, was for me, if not for every one, a pure triumph, disturbed by no retrospect, since I had not only never wavered in my principles and sentiments, but had drawn upon myself the personal hatred of Napoleon, as not many months before, on a despatch of my composition falling into his hands by treachery or accident, he had openly avowed.’

<sup>1</sup> This lady pushed the Protestant liberty or license of divorce to such an extreme as to be able to play at whist with three ex-husbands, whilst a fourth betted on her. In allusion to her practice of pensioning them off, it was said, ‘ *Elle se ruine en maris.*’

In the joy of his heart he goes on to expatiate on the merits of the various members of his establishment, especially on those of the French cook, Bastien, who accompanied him everywhere. But we must pass on at once to the Congress of Vienna in 1814, where all the potentates and master-spirits of the victorious side were congregated in one moving and glittering mass, and where everything of importance passed through his hands or under his immediate notice.

The first complete conference was attended by the plenipotentiaries of Austria, Prussia, England, France, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, and Russia. Whilst Gentz was amusing himself at a *soirée* at Madame Nesselrode's, Nesselrode came in and told him they had elected him First Secretary by acclamation. He had already been employed to draw up a declaration for the four great powers, England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia; and he now took an active share in their deliberations, besides discharging the proper duties of his post. It seems, also, to be an understood thing that he should act as penman to any of them who had any proposition to make or line of policy to urge; the *grands seigneurs* of the period not being, perhaps luckily for some of them, so ready with the pen as their successors. Thus he was at work on a discourse to be addressed by Count Herbertstein to Count Stadion in introducing him to the Chamber. Stadion, hearing of it, writes him a *joli billet*, requesting to see it, and begs him to compose the reply, which he does. Besides writing a paper on the slave-trade for Castlereagh, he translates his lordship's letter on the affair of Saxony into French, and gives a memorable proof of his independence by openly supporting it against his chief patron:—

'February 12.—At nine o'clock with Metternich. In translating Castlereagh's letter I felt my ideas cleared and strengthened. At four at Talleyrand's. Conversation in which he does me the most signal justice. Dined at

Metternich's with Wessenberg. After dinner, between seven and eight in the evening, I bring on the most important discussion on Castlereagh's letter, and hold to Metternich (with Wessenberg for witness) the most energetic language he ever heard from me. This day is one of the most marking (*marquans*) in the history of my public life: it will be perhaps *le plus beau* of my life.'

Besides doing him signal justice in words, which cost the speaker nothing, Talleyrand, before the Congress broke up, presented him with 22,000 florins, in the name of Louis XVIII., which is duly entered as a 'magnificent' donation. From Lord Castlereagh he received (through Cooke) 600*l.* in ducats, and *les plus folles promesses*.

Numerous entries give evidence of the female influence to which allusion has been made, and the manner in which the public interests were intermingled with private by the select few who had charged themselves with the re-settlement of Europe:—

'September 12.—Went to Prince Metternich; long conversation with him, not (unhappily) on public affairs, but on his and my relations with Madame de Sagan.'

It would seem that this lady inclined to the doctrine of a plurality of admirers, as well as a quick succession of husbands. Two days after the discussion of Castlereagh's letter, we find:—

'14.—Returned to Metternich; conversation with him—alas! on the unhappy *liaison* with *la* Windischgrätz, which appears to interest him still more than the affairs of the world.'

'22.—Dined with Metternich at Nesselrode's. M. informs me of his definitive rupture with the Duchess, which is at present an event of the first order.'

Here follows a specimen of a busy, if not exactly a well-spent, day of rest:—

'Sunday, Nov. 6.—Went out at ten. Conversations of

different kinds with Metternich. Returned at midday. Count Clam, *long talk with him on his new passion for Dorothee (Madame de Périgord)*. Visit of the Duc de Campo Chiaro, and sustained conversation with him. At four at the Princess Bagration's; very remarkable conversation with the Emperor of Russia, his projects, his conduct, &c. Dined at Metternich's with Wenzel, Lichtenstein, Binder, Neumann, &c. *Long conversation with him on his affairs of the heart*. At eight at Nesselrode's; M. de Stein, who is cold to me; the famous General Laharpe, who, in a conversation with Pozzo and me, betrays his bad principles without reserve. Returned home at half-past ten, and worked at a despatch for Bukarest.'

'Friday, 11th.—Visit to the King of Denmark—talked an hour with him. Then Metternich; long conversation, *constantly turning more on the confounded women than on business*.'

'18th.—Went out at eleven. At Metternich's. Returned. At half-past one at Talleyrand's. From three to four, curious conversation with the Duchess of Sagan on her fatal history with Metternich. Dined at Count Bernstorff's. Clam with me. At eight, general conference at Metternich's. *Fate of Genoa decided*. Returned at eleven, and worked at the *procès-verbal* till two in the morning.'

High play went on almost nightly, the fashionable game being ombre; but literature was not entirely lost sight of by this gay and agitated throng:

'Dined at Metternich's with Mme. Julie Zichy, Mme. de Wrba, la Princesse Thérèse, Mme. de Fuchs, Werner, Schlegel, &c. After the dinner Werner read the first acts of his tragedy of *Conigonde*.'

The picture would be incomplete without a practical joke or two, to lighten the labours of the plenipotentiaries. At a dinner at the Duchess's, the conversation, 'very free,' turned on the demoiselles H.; and the merriment was much enhanced on learning, after the departure of one of the party, Count Coronini de Carinthia, that he was engaged to one of them. In the



course of the evening Gentz received a written challenge, as from the Count, to fight the next day. The forgery, though suspected, was not discovered until the following morning, and Gentz's irritation was increased by a heavy loss the same evening at play.

In the summary of the year he states that his extraordinary receipts in the course of it had amounted to at least 17,000 ducats, besides his regular official income of about 9,000 florins, and the profits of his agency for Wallachia, obtained for him by Metternich in 1813. 'The result is that all branches of my domestic economy are flourishing: I have paid many debts: I have completed and embellished my establishment; and I have been enabled to do a great deal of good for my people. The aspect of public affairs is mournful; but not, as at other times, by the imposing and crushing weight suspended over our heads, but by the mediocrity and folly of almost all the actors; and as I have nothing to reproach myself with, the intimate knowledge of this pitiable course and of all those paltry creatures who govern the world, far from afflicting me, is a source of amusement, and I enjoy the spectacle as if it was given express for my idle moments.'

Swift, who had mixed on the same terms with the governing class, gave up his 'History of England,' exclaiming: 'I have found them all such a pack of rascals, I would have nothing more to say to them.' But Swift was a disappointed man, and Gentz was not.

The rest of the published day-books includes only portions of four months in 1819, July, August, September, and December; very important months for Germany and Gentz's reputation, since the Carlsbad Congress dates from them, and attempts have been made to fasten on him the responsibility of its unpopular resolutions. A spirited defence has been

published by Joseph Gentz,<sup>1</sup> a relative; but it was needless, for no one now doubts that Gentz acted conscientiously, in strict accordance with his avowed and confirmed principles. If there was a man in the world whom he revered more than another, whose good opinion he was most anxious to secure, it was Adam Müller, with whom he was in daily, almost hourly, communication whilst he was employed on the famous thirteenth article of the *Bundesakt*. The controversy raised by it could not be made intelligible to English readers without digressing widely into fields where they would be loth to follow; and we can take only a cursory glance at the rest of Gentz's public or political career, although his energy and industry never flagged, and, independently of his unpublished official labours, we could point to printed papers from his pen on every prominent question of European interest from 1819 till 1832. How he continued to be regarded by contemporaries, we learn from such indications as a passage in Châteaubriand's 'Congrès de Vérone,' who states that, on accepting the portfolio of foreign affairs in 1822, besides the usual letters to foreign ministers, he addressed '*un mot particulier*' to M. Gentz, knowing his influence with Metternich, and knowing also that the principal '*contrariété*' would come from the Cabinet of Vienna. This *mot particulier* begins:— 'Me voilà ministre, Monsieur. M. le Prince de Metternich vous communiquera peut-être la lettre où j'ai l'honneur de lui mander tout le détail. Maintenant ne m'abandonnez pas : je suis sur la brèche.'

Gentz was assailed as reactionary, and he was so in one sense; for from the time when (to borrow the beautiful metaphor of Canning), 'the spires and turrets

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Gentz und die heutige Politik. Von Josef Gentz. Zweite Auflage. Wien : 1861.

Ueber die Tagebücher von Friedrich Gentz und gegen Varnhagen's Nachwort. (Ein Nachtrag zu der Schrift 'Friedrich Gentz und die heutige Politik.') Von Josef Gentz. Wien : 1861.

of ancient establishments began to reappear above the subsiding wave,' he was tremblingly alive to signs in the political horizon which threatened a return of the deluge. The French Revolution of 1830 startled him; but he was amongst the first to deprecate a recurrence to the fatal course pursued by Germany in 1793, and to point out that there was nothing menacing to the peace of the world in the change of dynasty in France.

His multifarious correspondence also bears testimony to his large views, as well as to his vast knowledge, especially his letters to Adam Müller. Persons of distinction, from all quarters of the world, press eagerly for his opinion on the subjects which interest them. Thus, the late Earl Stanhope, a very clever and accomplished nobleman, keeps him fully informed, at intervals from 1825 to 1828, of the changes in the English ministry as well as the leading measures before Parliament, and earnestly presses for his advice.<sup>1</sup> Goethe begs him to employ his influence with his powerful friends to forward a literary object, and gracefully recalls the period when they 'conversed in the most cultivated society on the affairs of the heart and mind.' Alexander and William Humboldt write frequently. But space compels us to confine ourselves to the correspondence with Rahel, in which Gentz pours out his whole soul with the openness and felicity of expression which are traditionally stated to have made him so fascinating a talker.

Her husband's handwriting was the clearest and neatest ever seen, not excepting Porson's or Mrs. Piozzi's.<sup>2</sup> Hers was all but illegible; and we note the fact for the benefit of those who attach importance to

<sup>1</sup> Earl Stanhope's letters are written in German, and begin 'My dear and honoured friend.' The completest collection of Gentz's fugitive writings we are acquainted with, was made by his Lordship, and is now in the library at Chevening.

<sup>2</sup> The character and social position of Rahel, wife of Varnhagen von Ense, are described in the Essay on *Salons*.

penmanship as an indication of character. 'Since I often read your letter of March,' writes Gentz, 'I have copied it, to get over the torment of your bad handwriting, and preserve the enjoyment unimpaired: I now copy all your letters.' Yet they were not love-letters: at least not what Germans call love-letters; for they might pass for such in most other countries, and may be compared in this respect to a celebrated poem by a gifted lady beginning, 'I cannot love thee,' and containing some tolerably significant assurances that she could. On the 21st of September, 1810, he writes:—

'It has really been an endless mistake,—shall I say of ours or Nature's?—that we never arrived at love for each other,—I mean to ordinary complete love. A relation would have burst forth between us, the like of which the world has had but few. Instead of this, we have both of us wasted our best on *people* (Leute), as you distinguish this class; and are, each in a way, impoverished. You stood higher, saw more freely and farther, than I.'

Byron would not have thought it a mistake:

'No friend like to a woman man discovers,  
So that they have not been nor may be lovers.'

Then, with a rare frankness and self-knowledge, Gentz goes on to attribute his constant slowness or incapacity to seize the goods the Gods provided him to 'the meanest of all human knaveries, namely, vanity, the stupid striving for appearances, which cheats us out of all true enjoyment, out of the entire genuine reality of life.' We shall presently find Rahel valuing Gentz for his childlike betrayal of his weakness, as when he writes: 'Now, I beg of you, love, to write soon again, and soon again to flatter me in your heavenly way. Your flatteries are a true voluptuous soul-bath, out of which one comes refreshed and strengthened.' Most people would expect him to come out enervated; yet there *are* women who by applauding what is public-spirited, by sympathising with what is noble and ele-

vating, really brace the nerves of the author, the artist, the orator, the statesman, the patriot, or the philanthropist, for his allotted task. Steele said of Lady Elizabeth Hastings that to love her was a liberal education. At all events the taste for flattery from female lips is not a very uncommon nor a very culpable one, '*Vous flattez, coquine; mais n'importe, flattez toujours: c'est bien agréable.*' Gentz, too, was all made up of sensibility and nervousness—a complete conductor of electricity, as he says somewhere—an Eolian harp, which trembled at every passing breeze; and much of the fancy and feeling that light and warm his style may be traced to his susceptibility to temporary impressions:

‘They were but the wind passing carelessly over,  
And all the wild sweetness they waked was his own.’

He writes to Rahel in 1815:—‘That is the true *Eau de Portugal*, classic in form and substance. Scents are an important circumstance in life.’ ‘I am well; God be thanked. (What happiness!!) I am living alternatively in Baden and Vienna. I breakfast alternatively on *brioches*, with excellent butter, or other god-like eatables. I have got furniture at which the heart leaps, and am less afraid of death.’ He had been known to remonstrate very seriously with Metternich on the negligence of his cook, and the tendency of a bad dinner to impair the mental powers, and impede, instead of ‘lubricating,’ business. ‘*Des fleurs et des livres, voilà tout ce qu’il faut à ma vie,*’ exclaims Madame de Roland, who, if she was not belied, required a few accessories. But Gentz, in failing health, found his chief solace in books and flowers. The date of one of his letters runs thus:—

‘Weinhaus, a quarter of an hour from Vienna, the 28th of September, 1825. In a room before a large plate-glass window, through which I overlook my little garden, or

rather my great bouquet of flowers, as set in a frame, in a clear dark-blue sky, and with sixteen degrees of heat. As if you saw it: is it not?’

We find Lamartine complaining that he has lived too fast:—

*‘J’ai trop vu, trop senti, trop aimé de ma vie.’*

So Gentz complains that through his brain, over his life, have passed too many events, thoughts, combinations, works, men, destinies, for the memory to grapple with, or for him to dwell with pleasure on the past. ‘I am, and I was at all times, condemned to the Present; and although all passions, nay, to a certain degree, all unrest of desire and enjoyment have subsided in me, yet the charm of the Present is still too strong.’ He was an illustration of Lord Lytton’s new organ or faculty of ‘Weight’; and his philosophy of enjoyment might be summed up in the graceful words of the late Mr. H. Twiss’ unpublished song:—

*‘The night has spread its parting wings  
To join the day before it;  
And as for what the morning brings,  
The morning mists hang o’er it.’*

Just after Kotzebue had been stabbed by Sand, Gentz received a threatening letter, stating that, as he was not worthy of dying by the dagger, poison had been destined and prepared for him: that he had long been condemned as a traitor who had undermined the freedom of his country. This letter had a terrible effect on him. He excused himself from dining with a foreign ambassador, his assured friend, and for a week together did not venture to leave the house, and hardly to eat. Varnhagen, who speaks of the letter as a mystification, cites the alarm felt by the victim as a proof of his nervousness at the approach of danger or the thought of pain; but men of his temperament are not necessarily wanting in firmness or courage, and no womanly fear was betrayed by Gentz when he passed

through the outposts of hostile armies to beard Napoleon in his pride.

He was above the middle height, and his features indicated decision and self-confidence. He was frank to the verge of imprudence, and could not dissemble or dissimulate, if he would. Whenever he tried to adopt the diplomatic manner, he failed so egregiously that a 'foreign minister' (Paget, we believe) said he could always tell at a glance when Gentz wanted to delude or work upon him; for there was invariably the same stolen sidelong look of inquiry and doubt. He commonly gave up all attempt at reserve or concealment with a laugh.

Few in declining years would be ready, with Fénelon, to live their lives over again precisely as they had lived them. Many, after playing 'no unnoticed part,' would exclaim with James Smith—

'Would I resume it? Oh! no—  
Four acts are done—the jest grows stale,  
The waning lamps burn dim and pale,  
And reason asks *cui bono?*'

But a large number, perhaps the majority, would leap at the proposal to have back their youth, with its wild freshness and its buoyancy, if they might retain the dear-bought lessons of experience—

'Oh, who would not welcome that moment returning  
When passion first wak'd a new life through his frame,  
And his soul, like the wood that grows precious in burning,  
Gave out all its sweets to love's exquisite flame?

This boon, this blessing (if it be one), was virtually vouchsafed to Gentz, who, in his sixty-fifth year, was suddenly restored, as if by immersion in Medea's caldron instead of the baths of Gastein, to exuberant health and vigour—moral, mental, and physical—of mind, of body, and of heart. The miracle—for it sounds like one—with its memorable effects, had best be read in his own glowing language.<sup>1</sup> 'In a letter to

<sup>1</sup> The following extracts from the letters to Rahel, are taken from a translation (never published) of the series by Mr. Grote, the historian of Greece.

Rahel, 22nd September, 1830, after apologising for a 'long, very long' silence, he continues :—

'The first commencement of this happy revolution arose out of the circumstance that my health, which for fifteen years had suffered grievously—not so much by special attacks of illness, as by incessant discomfort with the gout—has, during the last two years, experienced a regeneration little short of miraculous. I feel myself at present thoroughly well, and have a keen sense of well-being, such as I scarcely experienced even during the best years of my life. One consequence of this, amongst others, was, that not only has my mind regained its entire youthful freshness, and my heart its full susceptibility, but also that my person has become strikingly *rajeuni*, and all my bodily faculties are again at my disposal. At my time of life, it is almost ludicrous to speak in such terms of myself; but, as I can make the communication with perfect truth, since it is made to me every day and from every side by others, why should I withhold from you, my sympathising friend, the satisfaction of hearing it from myself? I could produce to you, in support of it, testimonies from persons who have not seen me for some time, which would leave no doubt at all on your mind. My apprehension of death, which is well known to you, is on this account, though not altogether effaced, yet still so much cast in the shade that it seldom assails me; and I already begin tacitly to reckon upon attaining at least the extraordinary age of Bonstetten.

'You will now be somewhat prepared to understand what follows.

'Along with my returning health, I have thrown myself once more into the world and into social life, which I had for many years renounced. The satisfaction with which I was everywhere received, proved to me that I could still very well maintain my place in this circle. My increasing repugnance to public business,—though I have never for an instant ceased to attend to it conscientiously,—my growing fear of solitary study, which always presented to me nothing but melancholy conclusions,—have contributed, each in its way, to this change in my manner of living. I attached myself chiefly to the society of women, who have always been agreeable to me, *and who are at the present day far*



*above men*—much more than they were twenty-five or thirty years ago. I made my court (as people call it) to some of them, and procured for myself in this way particular interest among the general range of society. That I could ever again be in love, I regarded as a thing impossible, though I nevertheless felt that, to enjoy in perfection my renewed and regenerated existence, I ought to arrive once more even at this extreme limit. My presentiment has been realised in a most unexpected way. To you I must and I dare confess, what towards others I content myself with not formally denying, that since last winter I have borne in my bosom a passion of greater strength than any which I ever felt during my earlier life—that this passion was indeed accidental in its origin, but that I have since intentionally fostered and cherished it.

‘You will be astonished—perhaps horror-stricken—when I tell you that the object of this passion is a girl of nineteen years of age, and, what is more, a *danseuse*. I require all my confidence, not merely in your good nature, but in your liberality (in the old and lofty sense of that word)—in your exalted views, so much above all that is commonplace—in your enlarged range of thought—in your tolerance—I require all this to obviate the apprehension that you will at once condemn me upon my own confession, without grace or mercy.

‘Yet when I assure you that the intercourse with this girl has poured out upon me a fulness of felicity such as I have never known or felt before,—that this intercourse has been to me not only the counterpoise of numerous anxieties under which otherwise I should have infallibly succumbed, but also the upholding principle of my cheerfulness of spirits, my health, and my life—I think you will be inclined not only to excuse me, but also to admit, with your usual enlightened candour, that the person who could thus work upon me, besides the unbounded beauty by which she enchains me, must also possess other qualities which account for a relation such as I have depicted.

‘This person is now in Berlin. If on other accounts you happen still to concern yourself about the Theatre, you will probably hear of her; but *I* feel anxious that you should *see* her once or twice, if it be only upon the stage. I know from other evidences that you set a high value upon the

external appearance of people, and you are right in doing so. I am therefore anything rather than indifferent to the impression which this Fanny may make upon you; and I entreat you to take an opportunity of writing to me upon the subject.

‘Together with the sensibility to social amusements, to feminine beauty, to love,—I still tremble when I speak the word aloud, even before *you*,—there has been newly revived in me the sensibility to poetry. I avail myself of every leisure hour to read poetry—ancient and modern—Latin, German, Italian, French. How far I have gone in this favourite occupation, you shall judge by one example, the particular circumstances of which cannot be without interest for you.’

After mentioning how Heine’s poems had fallen in his way, and fascinated him, he proceeds :

‘At this moment I marvel at the courage which it has required to lay before you such a train of thoroughly unexpected confessions,—to tell you that I feel myself *rajeuni*,—that I am in love,—that I adore a *danseuse*,—and that I sympathise with Heine! You are, however, the only person in the world with whom I could hazard such avowals, nor could I even have hazarded them with you, unless this letter were going by an Austrian courier to Berlin. Almost every matter which it contains could only be written in the strictest confidence; but I was for a long time accustomed to think with you, to feel with you, and never to veil from you even my most hidden weaknesses. If you, on your side, have remained the *same*,—and how can I possibly doubt it,—reward my confidence with a letter in the old well-known style, friendly or reproachful, as you please. Acquaint me at the same time how matters go on with you, with your health and temper, with your temporal and eternal well-being. We two ought never to separate as long as we breathe. Pray chime in with this sentiment, and appease speedily the longing of your faithful friend, GENTZ.’

Opera-goers of mature years will not need to be told who this wonder-working Fanny was, but a few details relating to her may be welcome to a younger

generation. The Opera at Vienna was small, and hardly worthy of the Austrian capital; but it enjoyed a high authority in the musical world, and the ballet was conducted upon a scale that enabled it to rival those of Paris and Naples. In 1828-29, the leading *danseuses* were Fanny and Thérèse Elsler, sisters and natives of Vienna. Their father had been a familiar attendant for many years on the great composer, Joseph Haydn, who left him a considerable legacy, which, from no fault of his, was soon reduced to little or nothing. Of their mother we know nothing, except that, bred up in theatrical company of the lower sort, she had no scruple in agreeing with her husband to turn their daughters' personal attractions and accomplishments to the best account. Barbaja, the director of the Opera at Naples, engaged them for the San Carlos Theatre when mere children, and being also director of the Court Theatre of Vienna, brought them out at it as soon as he thought them sufficiently advanced to be produced with effect. They created a sensation; their reputation soon became European; and Fanny's style of dancing, independently of her exceeding loveliness, was exactly adapted to attract admirers of cultivated taste. 'Poetry put in action' was not too complimentary a phrase. The Duke de Reichstadt fell desperately in love with her, and might be seen day after day walking up and down near her lodgings, in the hope of a chance such as befell Faust with Margaret; but he was disappointed, and, although rumour has connected her with his premature death, they never met in private at all.

Gentz was simultaneously struck, and eagerly sought an introduction, which was by no means so easy as may be thought. There was, indeed, no 'mother of the maids' to watch over the morals of the 'corps de ballet,' but the theatres were under the guardianship of a public officer, the Count de Gallenberg, who was

in the habit of inviting to his house the performers, male and female, who stood highest in public esteem ; and it was perfectly understood that any acquaintance beyond their own circle must originate with him. For some time the Count refused to introduce Gentz, either to tantalise him, or to save him from the apprehended folly ; but the envied privilege was at last granted, and so assiduously followed up that he at length obtained exclusive possession of the prize. He was reputed rich on the strength of his prodigal expenditure : he was celebrated : he was the familiar companion of the great ; and there were other reasons why the mother gave him the preference over younger rivals : for he certainly owed his success, in the first instance, to the shameless venality of the mother—and the poor girl resigned herself to her destiny with a sigh. How he gradually won upon her may be collected from his letters ; and the enduring attachment she eventually contracted for him, when the tie was once formed, does credit to her understanding and her heart.

Two years before, in reference to Rahel's recommendation of some verses in the *Courrier Français*, he said that he had left off reading verses for many years, always excepting Virgil, Horace, and Lucan : that the only French poet he could still endure was Racine ; and that looking for verses in a French newspaper would be to him like taking a stroll into a pesthouse. His sudden taste for Heine's ' *Buch der Lieder*, ' therefore, is not the least striking feature of the transformation.

The subject of his love is resumed, after the lapse of a month, with the same vividness and intensity which render us loth to abridge the letters relating to it. They form, in fact, the very keystone of his character, and contain many striking passages unconnected with his passion. But we can only find room for two or three more :

'Presburg, October 18, 1830.

'The best instructed among the ordinary people around me think and affirm (for my connection with her is the subject of endless talk in the society here, where I am in great favour) that I have conquered her only by what is called my *eloquence*. This of itself would be singular enough; but still it is very far from being the truth. I have gained her singly and exclusively by the magical power of *my love*. When she first knew me, she neither knew nor even conceived that there existed anywhere *such a love*, and a hundred times over she has confessed to me that I had unfolded to her a new world by the manner in which I behaved to her from the very first moment, and still further by the revelation of a love the possibility of which she had never dreamt of, and which is, I must own, neither frequent nor common. Here alone lies the whole key of the phenomenon. You will understand, as a matter of course, that I never was silly enough to expect from her a return of passion, in the narrower sense of the word. I never imagined that she could "fall in love" with me, for even in the full fervour of passion my reason does not abandon me. It was enough for me to inspire her with a sentiment floating between friendship, gratitude, and love: and I did in fact succeed—for men succeed in everything which they struggle for with complete energy and genuine perseverance—in so planting and confirming this feeling in her mind, that it by degrees filled her whole soul, and at this moment, unless all the evidences deceive me, it cannot be supplanted or overcome by any other feeling whatever.

'Now imagine what it is, at my time of life and with my few remaining pretensions, to see a passion like mine thus rewarded? Imagine *la satisfaction de l'amour-propre*, from which no human being can disengage himself, and least of all one who takes as much pleasure in flattery as you and I do; imagine the blessedness of daily, undisturbed intercourse with a person in whom everything ravishes me,—who does not require, in order to produce this effect, "to rise like a complete Venus out of the sea," as you express it in a divine phrase of your letter, which I thoroughly comprehend—in whose eyes, in whose hands

(do you ever look at them !), in whose single and separate charms, my mind can absorb itself for hours together—whose voice tells upon me like magic—and with whom I carry on endless conversations which would often astound you, as I should do with the most docile school-girl : for I educate her with paternal care, and she is at once my beloved mistress and my faithful child. Imagine this rich stock of enjoyments, and in addition to it all, so much more which no tongue can tell, and it will be easy for you with a heart as comprehensive as yours to understand completely that which to others may still appear foolishness. . . .

‘I set a proper value upon your diplomatic talent, but I must at the same time acquaint you, that in this case it was hardly required. The nature of my connection with Fanny is so little a secret at Vienna that it is talked of every day ; and what contributes not a little to my comfort is, that those persons for whose opinion I care the most—amongst others Prince Metternich—never treat the matter with any other feeling than that of kindness and delicacy. There will be no *war* therefore on this account.’

Mixed up with passionate professions and glowing pictures of happiness, we find a curious piece of self-criticism, or rather self-laudation :

‘Really I am not blinded by vanity upon this occasion. I have entirely forgotten that I ever was an author ; and for the last twenty years I have not looked at a line of my printed works, the “Protocols of Congress” excepted. A little while ago, a man, who reads very well, read to me aloud the preface of a certain book, on the “Political Balance ;” and I was altogether astonished that I could ever have written so well. Pray read this preface once over, only for a joke, and then tell me yourself whether that was not something like a style. Schlegel has written but few pages which in point of style will bear comparison with it.

‘It is full time for me to conclude. This is the longest letter which has come from my pen for years past. It will give you pleasure, I know well. Reward me with a speedy answer, for I really languish for one. To be understood and loved is the highest enjoyment in the world, next to that

which the genuine passion of love affords. In our present correspondence both are confounded in one. Forwards! therefore. God be with you. GENTZ.'

This again recalls the Dean of St. Patrick's, who, as Scott relates, 'evinced an unaffected indifference for the fate of his writings, providing the end of their publication was answered,' but was once overheard muttering, after glancing over the 'Tale of a Tub,' 'Good God! what a genius I had when I wrote that book.'

No intoxication, bodily or mental, from wine, from opium, or from love, can last long without periods of depression, and these will be most trying where the enjoyment has been greatest:—

'Dearly bought the hidden treasure  
Finer feelings can bestow;  
Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure  
Thrill the deepest notes of woe.'

On January 21, 1831, he writes:—

'My intercourse with Fanny and her incomparable behaviour towards me, are now, in truth, the only bright spots in my life. Yet even this tender and blissful connection is insufficient to cheer me permanently. There are hours when even in her society I go through the mournful experience so beautifully described by one of the greatest poets—to me always one of the most dangerous poets of antiquity. I must quote the passage in Latin: Varnhagen will translate it to you. Of course you know the name of Lucretius:—

"Medio de fonte leporum  
Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angit."

"There springs out of the mid-fountain of delight something, which tortures even amongst the flowers themselves."

'When things are come to this pass, there is indeed good reason for complaint. Yet I initiate Fanny as little as I can into the secrets of my distress. The more completely she continues pure and free from embarrassment, the more certain am I to find in her that diversion of mind and refreshment, without which I should very shortly sink alto-

gether. But to you and to your clear head and strong soul, I speak out freely. Whether you blame or soothe me, I must be a gainer by this.'

Thinking it worse than useless to keep on repeating that obviously wrong things are wrong, we have refrained from applying the befitting comment to the many reprehensible episodes of this remarkable man's career; amongst which the absorbing passion of a sexagenarian for a girl of nineteen, a dancer, must undoubtedly be ranked. Besides, the business of narrators is with events, and if they turn aside to point the moral, they may weaken it by exciting a rebellious and defying spirit in those whom they assume to lead. In this particular case, the blame and ridicule of the incongruity were met half way by his avowal; and some palliation is to be found in the state of Viennese manners, the toleration of friends, and the fine qualities of the object, whose youthful errors were mainly owing to her parents, whilst the sterling virtues and respectability of her maturer years are her own.

It has been confidently asserted that the death of Goethe, March 22, 1832, made a deep impression on him—'proximus ardet Ucalegon'—but an 'Indian summer' is fearfully exhaustive of the sap of life: despondency is not unfrequently the sign or forerunner of decay; and if depressing occurrences shortened his life, they were those which occurred in 1830 and 1831. He died on June 9, 1832. "Nous l'avons vu mourir doucement, et au son d'une voix qui lui faisait oublier celle du temps."<sup>1</sup> Like Johnson, he dreaded death: like Johnson, he met it calmly, and found unexpected consolation in faith:—

'It is dreadful to meet old age and death. No one understood so well how to fortify me against them as you. I

<sup>1</sup> Chateaubriand, 'Congrès de Vérone.'



mean, to fortify me humanly; for I am farther advanced in religion than you. I fancy you have remained very heathenish; which, amongst other things, clearly comes of your blind love for that heathen of heathens, Goethe: I, on the contrary, during the last ten years, have become thoroughly Christian, and hold Christianity to be the genuine centre of the world. For all that is still youthful in me, I have to thank this beneficial revolution.'

This was written to Rahel in 1811, and he never fell back into unbelief or indifference. One evening, during the later years of his life, after dining at the Weinberg with Baron de Prokesch and two other friends, he accompanied them to Vienna in a carriage; and so fascinating was his conversation, that on arriving at the place where they were to separate, they stopped the carriage between three and four hours to listen to him. The subject was the immortality of the soul, which he eloquently upheld against all the sceptical arguments that could be suggested or recalled. There is a somewhat similar story of Windham passing half the night in the streets in conversation with Burke.

He died in debt; and the sole tribute to his memory, in the way of monument, is a simple tablet placed over his grave by Fanny Elsler. A fitting motto for it might have been taken from Goethe's 'Helena'—'*Viel geschmäht und viel bewundert*' (much abused and much admired). He had fairly earned both the abuse and the admiration; and a dispute whether the good or the bad preponderated, would be the familiar contest about the colour of the bi-coloured shield.

That so little was done for him by his most influential friend, sounds very like a confirmation of Swift's remark, that great men seldom do anything for those with whom they live in intimacy;<sup>1</sup> but his

<sup>1</sup> 'They call me nothing but Jonathan, and I said I believed they would leave me Jonathan as they found me, and that I never knew a ministry do anything for those whom they made companions of their pleasures, and I believe you will find it so; but I care not.' (*Journal to Stella*, February 7, 1711.)

refusal of the Emperor's offer of a promotion which was to have included pecuniary advantages, suggests a valid excuse for Metternich, although the refusal itself is unaccountable. If Gentz expected to disarm envy by a show of humility or disinterestedness, his ordinary discernment of the springs of human action was at fault: people far more readily forgive honours and titles than social superiority and influence without rank or wealth; and his position in the great and gay world, with nothing but his personal qualities to show for it, was precisely that which most stimulated the malice, by wounding the self-love of his calumniators. The mercenary nature of his relations with other countries was of course their most formidable weapon; which was blunted or parried by the positive and (we believe) well-founded assertion that Metternich was privy to all his transactions with foreign ministers, and that foreign ministers were privy to his unreserved communications with Metternich.

Extreme delicacy in money matters is of modern growth amongst public men in England, and forty years since had not taken root in the despotic Courts of Europe. All servants of the British crown are now peremptorily forbidden to accept gratifications in any shape from foreign potentates. The privilege of wearing foreign orders is obtained with difficulty, and, considering how frequently they are the reward of charlatanry, might be advantageously restricted within still closer limits. Naturally, therefore, we hear with surprise of the Austrian Government permitting a public servant of Gentz's eminence to draw on foreign powers for his chief means of subsistence; and the notoriety of his so doing flings the main responsibility upon them. There was no secrecy, or pretence of secrecy, in the matter: our only precise knowledge of his subsidies is derived from his abridged and corrected diaries; and one undeniable fact in his favour is that

the whole of his surviving friends dwell most emphatically on his loyalty, integrity, and truthfulness.

From the female point of view, faults and weaknesses became merits and fascinations. In a letter after his death to Ranke, Rahel, after deploring the impossibility of conveying her precise impressions by words, proceeds :

‘Therefore you cannot know that I then, and for that very reason, loved my lost friend when he said or did something downright childish. I loved him for saying he was so happy to be the first man in Prague,—that all the highest functionaries, great lords, and great ladies, were obliged to send or come to him, &c.—with a laugh of transport, and looking full into my eyes. Wise enough to be silent about this, is every trained distorted animal; but who has the self-betraying soul, the childlike simplicity of heart, to speak it out?

There are many whom we are obliged to praise piece by piece, and they do not find their way into the heart by love: there are others, a few, who may be much blamed, but they ever open the heart, and stir it to love. This is what Gentz did for me: and for me he will never die.’

Although this theory of amiability is confirmed by Rochefoucauld, who maintains that we love people rather for their faults than their virtues, such evidence to character would weigh more with a German than with an English tribunal. Yet it is by German modes of thought and conduct that German men and women must principally be judged. The moral atmosphere in which they lived, with their temptations and opportunities, must be kept constantly in view when they are arraigned at the bar of European public opinion; and a purely English standard of right and wrong would obviously lead to unjust or uncharitable conclusions when applied to a Rahel or a Gentz.

## MARIA EDGEWORTH: HER LIFE AND WRITINGS.

FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW FOR OCT. 1867.

*A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth, with a Selection from her Letters.* By the late Mrs. EDGEWORTH, edited by her Children. Not published. In 3 vols. 1867.

WE are afraid of appealing so confidently to the present generation, but are there any survivors of the last who do not habitually associate the name of Maria Edgeworth with a variety of agreeable recollections?—with scenes, images, and characters which were the delight of their youth—with the choicest specimens of that school of fiction in which amusement is blended with utility, and the understanding is addressed simultaneously with the fancy and the heart? All these, and they must still be many, will be rejoiced to hear that a Memoir has recently been printed (though it is as yet unpublished) which may enable them to watch the everyday life of their old favourite, to peep into the innermost folds of her mind, to track her genius to its source, to mark the growth of her powers, and fix how much was the gift of nature and how much the product of cultivation or of art. For ourselves, we were led by it at once to a reperusal of her works; and so satisfactory was the result, that we earnestly recommend a fresh or first trial of them to novel-readers of all ages, who are not utterly spoilt by Miss Braddon and Mrs. Wood.

There is another reason for reverting to Miss Edgeworth's writings with unabated interest, independently of their attractiveness. They contributed, more than any others that can be named, towards the inaugura-

tion of that splendid era of romance which began and reached its full effulgence with the author of 'Waverley.' In the General Preface to the collected edition of the Waverley Novels, after alluding to the two circumstances which led him to this style of composition, Scott says : 'The first was the extended and well-merited fame of Miss Edgeworth, whose Irish characters have gone so far to make the English familiar with the character of their gay and kind-hearted neighbours of Ireland, that she may be truly said to have done more towards completing the Union than perhaps all the legislative enactments by which it has been followed up. Without being so presumptuous as to hope to emulate the rich humour, pathetic tenderness, and admirable tact, which pervade the works of my accomplished friend, I felt that something might be attempted for my own country of the same kind with that which she has so fortunately achieved for Ireland.'

Luckily for her father, and not unluckily for Miss Edgeworth, their lives and labours are so blended and intertwined that her name and memory cannot be separated from his. They were connected by ties stronger than ties of blood : by community of objects, habits, affections, and modes of thought. He had plausible claims to the title of her literary parent. He divined the natural bent of her genius, and aided without forcing its development. He gave her the most bracing kind of education, moral and intellectual ; the groundwork being scrupulous accuracy of statement, patient observation, frankness, self-knowledge, and self-respect. He made her from early girlhood his companion and friend. He read with her, wrote with her, came before an applauding public hand-in-hand with her, and (we really believe unconsciously) traded on her. The best description of him in advanced years is given by Lord Byron :—

'I have been reading the Life by himself and daughter

of Mr. R. L. Edgeworth, the father of *the* Miss Edgeworth. It is altogether a great name. In 1813 I recollect to have met them in the fashionable world of London, in the assemblies of the hour, and at a breakfast of Sir Humphry and Lady Davy's, to which I was invited for the nonce. I had been the lion of 1812: Miss Edgeworth and Madame de Staël, with the Cossack, towards the end of 1813, were the exhibitions of the succeeding year. I thought Edgeworth a fine old fellow, of a clarety, elderly, red complexion, but active, brisk and endless. He was seventy, but did not look fifty—no, not forty-eight even. I had seen poor Fitzpatrick not very long before—a man of pleasure, wit, eloquence, all things. He tottered—but still talked like a gentleman, though feebly. Edgeworth bounced about, and talked loud and long, but he seemed neither weakly nor decrepit, and hardly old.

'He was not much admired in London, and I remember a "ryghte merrie" and conceited jest which was rife among the gallants of the day—viz. a paper had been presented for the *recall of Mrs. Siddons to the stage*, to which all men had been called to subscribe. Whereupon Thomas Moore, of profane and poetical memory, did propose that a similar paper should be subscribed and circumscribed for the *recall of Mr. Edgeworth to Ireland*. The fact was everybody cared more about her. She was a nice little unassuming "Jeannie-Deans-looking body," as we Scotch say; and if not handsome, certainly not ill-looking. Her conversation was as quiet as herself. One would never have guessed she could write her name; whereas her father talked, not as if he could write nothing else but as if nothing else was worth writing.'

Moore denies all participation in the 'ryghte merrie jest.' But Lord Byron himself is said to have proposed a Society for the Suppression of Edgeworth. The efforts of such an institution would have proved as unavailing as those of the Society for the Suppression of Vice. Edgeworth was insuppressible; and, take him for all in all, he was not a man whom it was proper or expedient to suppress. With the simple change of gender, we might apply to him what Talleyrand said of Madame de Staël: '*Elle est vraiment insupportable*.'

which, he qualified after a short pause by, '*c'est son seul défaut.*' Edgeworth was a useful man, an excellent man in many ways; although, like many useful and excellent men, a bore of the first magnitude. He was a patriot, a philanthropist, a good landlord, a good magistrate, a good husband, and (what is most to our present purpose) a good father.

The Edgeworths, of Edgeworth-Town, County Longford, were a family of considerable local distinction, who came into Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth. Their settlement there is clearly traced to Edward Edgeworth, bishop of Down and Connor, in 1593, who, dying without issue, left his fortune to his brother, Francis, in 1619. In the way of historical illustration, they boast of a Lady Edgeworth, a woman of extraordinary beauty and courage, who, in consequence of the gallant attentions of Charles II. at her presentation, refused to attend his court a second time, and afterwards gave an instance of presence of mind which equals or surpasses the Victoria-cross exploit of flinging a lighted shell out of a trench. On some sudden alarm at her husband's Irish castle of Lissard, she hurried to a garret for gunpowder, followed by a maid-servant carrying a candle without a candlestick. When the lady had taken what she wanted from the barrel, had locked the door, and was halfway down the stairs again, she observed that the girl had left the candle, and asked her what she had done with it. 'She had left it 'stuck in the barrel of black salt.' Lady Edgeworth returned by herself to the garret, put her hand carefully underneath the candle and carried it safely out.

Richard Lovell Edgeworth, the lineal descendant of Francis, and the representative of the family when we take it up, was born at Bath in 1744. His maternal grandfather was a Welsh judge named Lovell, of whom it is related that, travelling over the sands at Beau-

maris as he was going circuit, he was overtaken by the tide : the coach stuck fast in a quicksand ; the water rose rapidly, and the registrar, who had crept out of the window and taken refuge on the coach-box, whilst the servants clustered on the roof, earnestly entreated the judge to do the same. With the water nearly touching his lips he gravely replied : ' I will follow your counsel if you can quote any precedent for a judge's mounting a coach-box.'

It must be admitted that a man so descended had an hereditary right to firmness of nerve and eccentricity, and Edgeworth did not allow the right to fall into abeyance from disuse. He is reported to have said :— ' I am not a man of prejudice : I have had four wives ; the second and third were sisters ; and I was in love with the second in the lifetime of the first.' The first was Anna Maria, daughter of Paul Elers, Esq., of Black Bourton, in Oxfordshire, by whom he had Maria and a son. The second and third were Honora and Elizabeth Sneyd. The fourth, Miss Beaufort, daughter of the Rev. Dr. Beaufort and sister of the late Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, is the author of the memoir, edited by her children. The book is remarkably well written and edited ; and, with a few slight omissions and alterations, might be laid before the public in the full confidence that the reputation of every one concerned, whether dead or living, would be confirmed or raised by it. The selections from the letters are peculiarly valuable, as well from the spirited descriptions, curious anecdotes, and sound remarks on things and people, as from the light they throw on Miss Edgeworth's life, character, and writings. We therefore purpose to quote liberally from them.

Maria (born January 1, 1767) had only just attained her sixth year when her mother died, and she just remembered being taken to the death-bed for a last farewell. Prior to this event her childhood had been passed



at Black Bourton, where she ran some risk of being spoilt by the fond indulgence of her aunts. After the lapse of a few months her mother's place was occupied by a step-mother, who exercised too important an influence on the embryo authoress to allow of her being uncere- moniously introduced.

Honora Sneyd was a daughter of a younger son of Ralph Sneyd, Esq., of Bishton, in Staffordshire. Her father having become a widower in early life, she was bred up under the care of Mrs. Seward, with her sworn friend, the famous Anna, and it was at Lichfield, in 1770, that Edgeworth first became acquainted with her, whilst on a visit to Day, the author of 'Sandford and Merton.' He has recorded his impressions in his Memoirs :

'During this intercourse, I perceived the superiority of Miss Honora Sneyd's capacity. Her memory was not copiously stored with poetry ; and, though no way deficient, her knowledge had not been much enlarged by books ; but her sentiments were on all subjects so just, and were delivered with such blushing modesty (though not without an air of conscious worth), as to command attention from every one capable of appreciating female excellence. Her person was graceful, her features beautiful, and their expression such as to heighten the eloquence of everything she said. I was six-and-twenty ; and now, for the first time in my life, I saw a woman that equalled the picture of perfection which existed in my imagination. I had long suffered from the want of that cheerfulness in a wife, without which marriage could not be agreeable to a man of such a temper as mine. I had borne this evil, I believe, with patience ; but my not being happy at home exposed me to the danger of being too happy elsewhere.'

Miss Seward, in a note to her 'Monody on the Death of Major André,' asserts that, in a fit of despair at being jilted by this lady, André threw up his business as a merchant, entered the army, and met his untimely fate. Nor can we agree with Edgeworth that the assertion is satisfactorily refuted by the dates ; for André's first

commission was dated March 4th, 1771, prior to her marriage, but not necessarily prior to her rejection of his suit. He was certainly deeply attached to her; and so was Day, who wrote her an argumentative proposal comprised in several sheets of paper, to which she wrote an equally long and argumentative refusal. The pith of his reasoning was that the best thing for her would be to live with him secluded from what is called the world; the pith of her reply being that she would rather live in it. On receiving this reply he took to his bed, and was profusely bled by his friend, Dr. Darwin; but speedily thought better of the matter, got up, rejoined the circle, and fell in love with her sister.

A stranger or more amusing set of people than were then collected at Lichfield it would be no easy matter to light upon; but they were people of principle, and in the midst of their own weaknesses could give one another good advice upon a pinch. Edgeworth tells us that Day could not see more plainly than himself the imprudence and folly of becoming too fond of an object which he could not hope to obtain. 'With all the eloquence of virtue and of friendship, he represented to me the danger, the criminality, of such an attachment. I knew that there is but one certain method of ending such dangers—*flight*.' He resolved to go abroad, and Day determined to go abroad too, with the view of devoting a large portion of his time to the acquirement of those accomplishments (riding, dancing, fencing, &c.) which he had formerly treated with sovereign contempt. 'Miss Elizabeth Sneyd had convinced him that he could not with propriety abase or ridicule talents in which he appeared obviously deficient.' As we are speaking of another future step-mother, it is hardly a digression to add that 'on her part she promised not to go to London, Bath, or any public place of amusement, till his return, and she engaged with alacrity to prosecute an

excellent course of reading, which they had agreed upon before his departure.'

Abroad they went, and made Lyons their headquarters for nearly two years, Edgeworth having undertaken to construct a new kind of ferry-boat across the Rhone and a bridge for wheelbarrows over a ravine. Mrs. Edgeworth, number one, joined him there; and as at the end of some months she returned at her own earnest request to England to be confined, she had small reason to complain of neglect, nor does she anywhere appear to have been disturbed by jealousy of a rival or successor. He distinctly states that he steadily adhered to the resolution he had formed on leaving England, never to keep up the slightest intercourse with the object of his irregular affection (the future number two) by letter, message, or inquiry. Mrs. Edgeworth died in childbirth, March 1773, and he instantly started for England, where he met Day. The first words Day said to him were, 'Have you heard anything of Honora Sneyd?' On being answered in the negative, Day resumed: 'My dear friend, while virtue and honour forbade you to think of her, I did everything in my power to separate you; but now that you are both at liberty, I have used the utmost expedition to reach you on your arrival in England, that I might be the first to tell you that Honora is in perfect health and beauty; improved in person and in mind, and, though surrounded by lovers, still her own mistress.'

We cannot help suspecting that the fascinating Honora had an instinctive prescience of coming events, and that her heart was not altogether unoccupied when she transferred Day to her sister, and unwittingly hurried poor André to his fate. Neither do we put implicit faith in the widowed suitor's confusion and unconsciousness at their first meeting, when he avers: 'I have been told that the last person whom I addressed or saw, when I came into the room, was Honora

Sneyd. This I do not remember ; but I am perfectly sure that, when I did see her, she appeared to me most lovely, even more lovely than when we parted. What her sentiments might be it was impossible to divine. My addresses were, after some time, permitted and approved ; and, with the consent of her father, Miss Honora Sneyd and I were married (1773) by special license, in the ladies' choir, in the Cathedral at Lichfield.'

They were married on the 17th July ; a rather hasty proceeding, unless there is an error of a year, which would make the period of probation improbably long. Immediately after the ceremony they went to Ireland ; and here the narrative is taken up in the second page of the Memoir :

'On Mr. Edgeworth's marriage with Honora Sneyd, Maria accompanied them to Ireland. Of this visit she recollected very little, except that she was a mischievous child, amusing herself once at her aunt Fox's when the company were unmindful of her, cutting out the squares in a checked sofa cover, and one day trampling through a number of hot-bed frames that had just been glazed, laid on the grass before the door at Edgeworth-Town. She recollected her delight at the crashing of the glass, but, immorally, did not remember either cutting her feet or how she was punished for this performance.'

Her step-mother was to her all that the most affectionate mother could have been, and had the happy art of inspiring perfect confidence along with a degree of admiration approaching to awe. 'The surpassing beauty of her presence struck Maria, young as she was, at their first acquaintance : she remembered standing by her dressing-table, and looking up at her with a sudden feeling of—How beautiful !' This estimable lady's health unfortunately began to fail in 1778, and Maria, then in her eighth year, was placed at school at Derby, with a Mrs. Lataffiere, who

was always kindly remembered by her pupil, although the writing-master of this establishment earned the most lasting title to her gratitude and that of her correspondents by teaching her to write the beautiful hand which she retained to the end of her life. She said that, on the first day of her entrance in the school-room, she felt more admiration for a child, less than herself, who could repeat the nine parts of speech than she ever felt afterwards for any effort of human genius.

The first of the printed letters from Edgeworth to his daughter is dated April 6th, 1780, and the method he pursued with her may be collected from it: 'It would be very agreeable to me, my dear Maria, to have letters from you familiarly: I wish to know what you like and what you dislike: I wish to communicate to you what little knowledge I have acquired, that you may have a tincture of every species of literature, and form your taste by choice and not by chance.' The same tone is taken in the only printed letter from Mrs. Honora Edgeworth to her daughter-in-law, dated October 10, 1779, in which, after impressing 'that it is in vain to attempt to please a person who will not tell us what they do and what they do not desire,' she continues: 'It is very agreeable to me to think of conversing with you as my equal in every respect but age, and of my making that inequality of use to you, by giving you the advantage of the experience I have had, and the observations I have been able to make, as these are parts of knowledge, which nothing but time can bestow.' On May 2, 1780, Edgeworth writes:—

'My dear Daughter,—At six o'clock on Sunday morning your excellent mother expired in my arms. She now lies dead beside me, and I know I am doing what would give her pleasure, if she were capable of feeling anything, by writing to you at this time to fix her excellent image in your mind. . . . Continue, my dear daughter, the desire which you feel of becoming amiable, prudent, and of use.

The ornamental parts of a character, with such an understanding as yours, necessarily ensue: but true judgment and sagacity in the choice of friends, and the regulation of your behaviour can be had only from reflection and from being thoroughly convinced of what experience teaches in general too late, that to be happy we must be good.

‘God bless you, and make you ambitious of that valuable praise which the amiable character of your dear mother forces from the virtuous and the wise. My writing to you in my present situation will, my dearest daughter, be remembered by you as the strongest proof of the love of your approving and affectionate father.’

At one of the Provençal Courts of Love in the thirteenth century the question was argued whether a second marriage by man or woman be or be not complimentary to the deceased partner in the first. Edgeworth had no hesitation in deciding this question in the affirmative, backed as he was by the authority of his second wife. She enjoined him on her death-bed to marry her sister Elizabeth, who had flung over Day after he had undergone a regular gymnastic training for her sake :

‘Nothing is more erroneous than the common belief, that a man who has lived in the greatest happiness with one wife will be the most averse to take another. On the contrary, the loss of happiness which he feels when he loses her necessarily urges him to endeavour to be again placed in a situation, which had constituted his former felicity.

‘I felt that Honora had judged wisely, and from a thorough knowledge of my character, when she had advised me to marry again as soon as I could meet with a woman who would make a good mother to my children and an agreeable companion to me. She had formed an idea, that her sister Elizabeth was better suited to me than any other woman; and thought that I was equally well suited to her. Of all Honora’s sisters I had seen the least of Elizabeth.’

If ever there were such things as marriages made in heaven, three of Edgeworth’s might be so described, for

they were extremely happy marriages, although the circumstances under which they were brought about were irreconcilable with all ordinary rules and probabilities. Elizabeth Sneyd, when the successorship was first proposed by her dying sister, revolted at it: 'Not only,' observes Edgeworth, 'because I was her sister's husband, and because she had another attachment'—pretty strong grounds in the common mundane point of view—'but, independently of these circumstances, as she distinctly said, I was the last man of her acquaintance that she should have thought of for a husband; and certainly, notwithstanding her beauty, abilities, and polished manners, I believed she was as little suited to me.'

But there's a divinity that shapes our ends: the two negatives made an affirmative: the antipathy grew into sympathy: the other attachment was shaken off: the religious scruple was got over: and one fine morning in the December of 1780 (less than eight months after the death of number two), the widower and the sister of his deceased wife met to be married in the parish church of Scarborough. At this critical point there was a hitch. The clergyman was so alarmed by a letter 'as to make it cruel to press him to perform the ceremony.' So the couple separated. The bride expectant started with her friend, Lady Holte, for Bath: the bridegroom hurried to London with his children, took lodgings in Gray's Inn, and had the banns published three times in St. Andrew's Church, Holborn. When all was ready for a second attempt, she came from Bath, 'and on Christmas Day, 1780, was married to me in the presence of my first wife's brother, Mr. Elers, his lady, and Mr. Day'—just the very last people we should have expected to see at the celebration. It will be remembered that, prior to the Statute of 5 and 6 William IV. c. 64, marriages within the Levitical degrees were voidable, not void, and if

not invalidated during the lifetime of both parties, held good to all intents and purposes.

Neither the death of Honora, nor the courtship of Elizabeth with its embarrassments, appear to have diminished the care with which Edgeworth watched over the mental training of his daughter : for on May 25, 1780, he writes from Lichfield :—

‘ I also beg that you will send me a tale, about the length of a “ Spectator,” upon the subject of Generosity ; it must be taken from history or romance, and must be sent the day se’nnight after you receive this, and I beg you will take some pains about it.

‘ The same subject (we are informed in the Memoir) was given at the same time to a young gentleman from Oxford, then at Lichfield. When the two stories were completed, they were given to Mr. William Sneyd, Mr. Edgeworth’s brother-in-law, to decide on their merits ; he pronounced Maria’s to be very much the best : “ an excellent story, and extremely well written ; but where’s the Generosity ? ” A saying which became a sort of proverb with her afterwards. It was Maria’s first story ; but it has not been preserved ; she used to say that there was in it a sentence of inextricable confusion between a saddle, a man, and his horse.’

In the same year, 1780, she was removed from Mrs. Lataffiere’s to the fashionable establishment of Mrs. Davis in Upper Wimpole Street. ‘ Even in the midst of the embarrassment of the introduction to her new mistress, she was struck by the reflected effect in Mrs. Davis’s countenance of her father’s air and address when he brought her to the school.’ Whatever the effect of his air and address on others, he certainly contrived to impress wife after wife, and every one of his many children by each of them, with the conviction that he had not his equal upon earth. Mrs. Davis, it is stated, treated Maria with kindness and consideration, though she was neither beautiful nor fashionable, and gave her the full benefit of an invention for drawing out young ladies, which, we hope, died out with this



establishment. 'Excellent masters were in attendance, and Maria went through all the usual tortures of back boards, iron collars, and dumbbells, with the unusual one of being swung by the neck to draw out the muscles, and increase the growth, a signal failure in her case.' Did it succeed in any case? There is a story of a wry-necked Prince of Condé falling in the hunting field, and coming to himself just in time to stop the peasants who picked him up in a well-intended effort to pull him straight; but the notion of pulling out a young lady like a telescope was surely peculiar to a 'finishing' school. By a parity of reason they should be made to stand with weights on their heads when they are growing too fast.

Maria had so little taste for music that the music-master advised her to give up learning to play on the pianoforte. 'He, however, underrated her powers of ear,' remarks her third step-mother, 'for when I knew her she enjoyed good music, and at Mrs. Davis's she learned to dance well, and liked it. She delighted to remember the pleasure she felt in the perfect time in which her companions executed a favourite dance of that day, Slingsby's Allemand.' The probabilities are, notwithstanding, all in favour of the music-master who gives up a pupil; and an ear for time is not unfrequently deficient in the sensibility which constitutes a good ear for music. Miss Edgeworth was about upon a par with Jeremy in 'Love for Love' in this respect: 'Yes, I have a reasonable good ear, sir, as to jigs and country dances, and the like. I don't much matter your solos and sonatas.'

On the other hand she had a great facility for learning languages, and she found her Italian and French exercises so easy that she wrote off those given out for the whole quarter at once, keeping them strung together in her desk, and read for amusement whilst the other girls were labouring at their tasks. 'Her favourite

seat during playtime was under a high ebony cabinet which stood at one end of the schoolroom ; and here she often remained so completely absorbed by the book she was reading as to be perfectly deaf to all the noises around her, only occasionally startled into consciousness of it by some unusual uproar. This early habit of concentrated attention, perhaps inherent in minds of great genius, continued through life.' It is so inherent, so inseparable, as to have been sometimes thought identical with genius ; which Buffon defines, a superior aptitude to patience. Another noteworthy trait of this period has been preserved. 'She was remembered by her companions, both at Mrs. Lataffiere's and Mrs. Davis's, for her entertaining stories ; and she learned, with all the tact of an improvisatrice, to know which story was most successful by the unmistakable evidence of her auditors' wakefulness, when she narrated at night for those who were in the bedroom with her.'

She was taken from school in 1782, and went with her father and the rest of the family to Edgeworth-Town, her home for the remainder of her life. Her first impressions are fortunately set down in her continuation of her father's Memoirs :—

'I accompanied my father to Ireland. Before this time I had not, except during a few months of my childhood, ever been in that country ; therefore everything there was new to me : and though I was then but *twelve years old*, and though such a length of time has since elapsed, I have retained a clear and strong recollection of our arrival at Edgeworth-Town.

'Things and persons are so much improved in Ireland of latter days, that only those who can remember how they were some thirty or forty years ago can conceive the variety of domestic grievances, which, in those times, assailed the master of a family, immediately upon his arrival at his Irish home. Wherever he turned his eyes, in or out of his house, damp, dilapidation, waste ! appeared. Painting, glazing, roofing, fencing, finishing—all were wanting.

'The backyard, and even the front lawn round the windows of the house, were filled with loungers, followers, and petitioners; tenants, undertenants, drivers, sub-agent and agent, were to have audience; and they all had grievances and secret informations, accusations reciprocating, and quarrels each under each interminable.'

She could never have been guilty of the weakness which the late Mr. Croker laboured so hard to fix on Madame d'Arblay; but she was undoubtedly in her sixteenth year in 1782, and both memoirs concur in fixing the permanent return to Ireland in that year. She continues:

'I was with him constantly, and I was amused and interested in seeing how he made his way through these complaints, petitions, and grievances, with decision and despatch; he, all the time, in good humour with the people, and they delighted with him; though he often "rated them roundly," when they stood before him perverse in litigation, helpless in procrastination, detected in cunning, or convicted of falsehood. They saw into his character, almost as soon as he understood theirs. The first remark which I heard whispered aside among the people, with congratulatory looks at each other, was—"His honour, any way, is *good pay*."

'It was said of the celebrated King of Prussia, that "he scolded like a trooper, and paid like a prince." Such a man would be liked in Ireland; but there is a higher description of character, which (give them but time to know it) the Irish would infinitely prefer. One who paid, not like a prince but like a man of sense and humanity.'

It is new to us that the celebrated King of Prussia paid like a prince. Even Mr. Carlyle has not endowed him with that merit; but we have no doubt that Mr. Edgeworth paid like a man of sense and humanity; and details enough are given by his daughter to prove that he resolutely pursued the precise course which a resident landlord should pursue, to remedy the worst evils of that unhappy country. He had no dealings with middlemen. He received his rents without the inter-

vention of agent or sub-agent. He chose his tenants for their character. The sole claims to preference were industry, honesty, and sobriety. He resisted subdivision. He made no difference between Catholic and Protestant, Saxon and Celt ; and his sound administration of justice grew into a proverb. Our immediate object, however, in referring to his domestic arrangements and way of life is to show how materials for the future novelist accumulated and were hived up :

‘ Some men live with their family, without letting them know their affairs ; and, however great may be their affection and esteem for their wives and children, think that they have nothing to do with business.—This was not my father’s way of thinking.—On the contrary, not only his wife but his children knew all his affairs. Whatever business he had to do was done in the midst of his family, usually in the common sitting-room : so that we were intimately acquainted, not only with his general principles of conduct, but with the most minute details of their every-day application. I further enjoyed some peculiar advantages :—he kindly wished to give me habits of business ; and for this purpose, allowed me during many years to assist him in copying his letters of business, and in receiving his rents.’

Within visiting distance of Edgeworth-Town was Pakenham Hall, the residence of Lord Longford, where a large family was growing up, including ‘ Kitty Pakenham,’ the future Duchess of Wellington. Here Miss Edgeworth became acquainted with Mrs. Greville, the author of the ‘ Ode to Indifference,’ and many other people of distinction. Another neighbouring house was Castle Forbes, the residence of the Earl of Granard, where a various and agreeable society assembled, especially when Lady Granard’s mother, Lady Moira, was staying there. The times, again, were highly favourable for the observer who wished to see national characteristics called out and placed in broad relief. The stirring, exciting, elevating influence of the great

Volunteer movement was in full operation during the early years of Miss Edgeworth's residence in Ireland ; and she was in the thick of the rebellion in 1798. There is no reason to suppose, however, that either her father or herself foresaw the line of composition in which she was destined to win fame ; and his principal care was that she should acquire clearness of thought and accuracy of expression.

In the autumn of 1782 she began at his suggestion to translate Madame de Genlis's 'Adèle et Théodore ;' and she had completed one volume, when Holcroft's translation appeared. The time spent on this work, we are told, was not regarded as misspent : it fixed her handwriting, and gave her 'a readiness and choice of words which only translation reaches.' Day, who had a horror of female authorship, was shocked at her having been permitted even to translate, and wrote a congratulatory letter to Edgeworth when the publication was prevented. It was from the recollection of his argument (she states), and of her father's reply, that 'Letters for Literary Ladies' were written nearly ten years afterwards. 'They were not published, nor was anything of ours published, till some time after Mr. Day's death (in 1789). Though sensible that there was much prejudice mixed with his reasons, yet deference for his friend's judgment prevailed with my father and made him dread for his daughter the name of authoress. Yet, though publication was out of our thoughts, as subjects occurred, many essays and tales were written for private amusement.' This delay was fortunate ; it gave her powers time to ripen ; she wrote because her mind was full, and having been originally forced into the observance of the Horatian maxim—*nonumque prematur in annum*—she afterwards abided by it of her own free choice and at her father's suggestion. 'He would sometimes advise me to lay by what was done for several months and turn my mind

to something else, that we might look back at it afterwards with fresh eyes.'

The peasant poet, Clare, touchingly alludes to the hard pressure which compels the writer for bread to 'forestall the blighted harvest of the brain.' But want is a more allowable, and not a more deleterious, stimulant than vanity, or that morbid longing for publicity which is now inundating us with trash; and, if ladies and gentlemen who are eager to appear in print could only be advised to take example from Miss Edgeworth, they would save their friends an infinity of trouble and vexation besides improving their own chances of success.

The first story which Maria wrote, after the tale on 'Generosity,' was 'The Bracelets,' and some of the others now in the 'Parents' Assistant' and 'Early Lessons.' 'Dog Trusty and the Honest Boy,' and the 'Thief,' were written at this time (1791). She used to write her stories on a slate, then read them out to her sisters, and if they were approved, she copied them. This is Mrs. Edgeworth's account in the Memoir, but her own gives her a larger and more miscellaneous set of judges. She says that her father called upon the whole family to hear and judge of all they were writing, and adds :

'Whenever I thought of writing anything, I always told him my first rough plans; and always, with the instinct of a good critic, he used to fix immediately upon that which would best answer the purpose.—"*Sketch that, and show it to me.*"—These words, from the experience of his sagacity, never failed to inspire me with hope of success. It was then sketched. Sometimes, when I was fond of a particular part, I used to dilate on it in the sketch; but to this he always objected—"I don't want any of your painting—none of your drapery!—I can imagine all that—let me see the bare skeleton."' "

We quote these passages because they have been

unaccountably overlooked in appreciating the share which Edgeworth had in his daughter's writings and determining the extent to which she was indebted to him for her fame. We shall show in the proper place that the entire conception of her best known work must be credited to him.

Prior to 1791, the information is meagre, and there are only two letters from Maria; one to Miss Charlotte Sneyd, and one to Mrs. Ruxton (her paternal aunt), the first of a series which continued forty-two years. Dating from this period, her letters form the principal contents of the volumes. As already intimated, they are admirable; but, like all family letters, not excepting those of Madame de Sévigné, they contain a good deal of matter which has no intrinsic worth although it forms an indispensable setting for the rest. The number of remarkable people she fell in with and commemorates from the earliest period is extraordinary. One of these, Dr. Darwin, must have won Edgeworth's heart at once by his definition of a fool: 'A fool, Mr. Edgeworth, you know, is a man who never tried an experiment in his life.' If, reversing this theory, we are to estimate a man's wisdom by the number of experiments he tried, the seven sages of Greece and the wise men from the East together would have been no match for her father. On March 9, 1792, she writes from Clifton, where she was on a visit to a married sister, Mrs. King:

'My father has just returned from Dr. Darwin's, where he has been nearly three weeks; they were extremely kind, and pressed him very much to take a house in or near Derby for the summer. He has been, as Dr. Darwin expressed it, "breathing the breath of life into the brazen lungs of a clock," which he had made at Edgeworth-Town as a present for him. He saw the first part of Dr. Darwin's "Botanic Garden;" 900*l.* was what his bookseller gave him for the whole! On his return from Derby, my father spent a day

with Mr. Kier, the great chemist, at Birmingham: he was speaking to him of the late discovery of fulminating silver, with which I suppose your ladyship is well acquainted, though it be new to Henry and me. A lady and gentleman went into a laboratory where a few grains of fulminating silver were lying in a mortar: the gentleman as he was talking happened to stir it with the end of his cane, which was tipped with iron,—the fulminating silver exploded instantly, and blew the lady, the gentleman, and the whole laboratory to pieces! Take care how you go into laboratories with gentlemen, unless they are like Sir Plume, skilled in the “nice conduct” of their canes.’<sup>1</sup>

Her mode of pointing or capping a remark by a quotation or a good story is one marked attraction of her letters :

‘ Anna was extremely sorry that she could not see you again before she left Ireland ; but you will soon be in the same kingdom again, and that is one great point gained, as Mr. Weaver, a travelling astronomical lecturer, who carried the universe about in a box, told us. “ Sir,” said he to my father, “ when you look at a map, do you know that the east is always on your right hand, and the west on your left ? ” “ Yes,” replied my father, with a very modest look, “ I believe I do.” “ Well,” said the man of learning, “ that’s one great point gained.”

She was at no time much given to sentimentality or to what is popularly understood by romance: ‘ I had much rather (she writes in 1793) make a bargain with anyone I loved to read the same book with them at the same hour, than to look at the moon like Rousseau’s famous lovers.’ Speaking of Carnarvon Castle, and the impression of sublimity made on her by its grandeur in decay, she naively adds: ‘ I believe these old castles interest one by calling up ideas of past times, which are in such strange contrast with the present.’ Describing

<sup>1</sup> ‘ Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,  
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane.’

*The Rape of the Lock.*



a large and gloomy apartment which she occupied at Bruges, she says: 'I am sure Mrs. Radcliffe might have kept her heroine wandering about this room for six good pages. When we meet I will tell Margaret of the night Charlotte and I spent in this room, and the footsteps we heard creak—just a room and just a night to suit her taste.'

The sober, sensible, rational view of love which she uniformly takes in her novels is expressed in a letter dated May 16, 1798, to Miss Beaufort, then on the point of becoming her third step-mother:—

'Amongst the many kindnesses my father has shown me, the greatest, I think, has been his permitting me to see his heart *à découvert*; and I have seen by your kind sincerity and his, that, in good and cultivated minds, love is no idle passion, but one that inspires useful and generous energy. I have been convinced by your example of what I was always inclined to believe, that the power of feeling affection is increased by the cultivation of the understanding. The wife of an Indian Yogii (if a Yogii be permitted to have a wife) might be a very affectionate woman, but her sympathy with her husband could not have a very extensive sphere. As his eyes are to be continually fixed upon the point of his nose, hers in duteous sympathy must squint in like manner; and if the perfection of his virtue be to sit so still that the birds (*vide* Sacontala) may, unmolested, build nests in his hair, his wife cannot better show her affection than by yielding her tresses to them with similar patient stupidity. Are there not European Yogiis, or men whose ideas do not go much further than *le bout du nez*? And how delightful it must be to be chained for better for worse to one of this species. I should guess—for I know nothing of the matter—that the courtship of an ignorant lover must be almost as insipid as a marriage with him; for "my jewel" continually repeated, without new setting, must surely fatigue a little.'

The same letter contains some excellent remarks on the manner in which familiarity and cordiality should be met, and due distinctions observed, in social or domestic relations:

‘I flatter myself that you will find me gratefully exact *en belle fille*. I think there is a great deal of difference between that species of ceremony which exists with acquaintance, and that which should always exist with the best of friends: the one prevents the growth of affection, the other preserves it in youth and age. Many foolish people make fine plantations, and forget to fence them: so the young trees are destroyed by the young cattle, and the bark of the forest trees is sometimes injured. You need not, dear Miss Beaufort, fence yourself round with strong palings in this family, where all have been early accustomed to mind their boundaries. As for me, you see my intentions, or at least my theories, are good enough: if my practice be but half as good, you will be content, will you not? But theory was born in Brobdingnag, and practice in Lilliput. So much the better for me.’

The rapidity with which Mr. Edgeworth's marriages succeeded each other was not the least remarkable circumstance connected with them; and, although there is no evidence to justify the presumption, his ill-wishers may be pardoned for suspecting that he did not invariably observe the maxim, ‘Tis good to be off with the old love (or wife), before you are on with the new.’ His third wife died in November, 1797; and he was married to the fourth in May, 1798, the ceremony being performed by her brother, the Rev. William Beaufort. The time was curiously chosen, for the rebellion had broken out, and their wedding-trip to Edgeworth-Town lay through the disturbed districts. One of the objects that sorely tried the nerves of the bride was an improvised gallows in the shape of a car standing on end, with the shafts in the air, and a man hanging between them.

An eminent critic (in the ‘Quarterly Review’) accused Miss Edgeworth of indelicacy in so readily sanctioning her father's marriages, and transferring her dutiful affections at his bidding. That she did so is extraordinary, but not necessarily wrong. With regard to

the last, she states that it was not till 1798, after the third wife's death, during a visit of the Beaufort family at Edgeworth-Town, that he formed the attachment to Miss Beaufort :—

‘ When I first knew of this attachment, and before I was well acquainted with her, I own I did not wish for the marriage. I had not my father's quick penetration into character: I did not at first see the superior abilities or qualities which he discovered; nor did I anticipate any of the happy consequences from this union which he foresaw. All that I thought, I told him. With the most kind patience he bore with me, and, instead of withdrawing his affection, honoured me the more with his confidence.’

All resistance and repugnance were overcome by his eloquence or pertinacity, and he closes a letter to Day about a bust, the upas tree, frogs, agriculture, a heating apparatus, and a speaking machine, with this passage :—

‘ And now for my piece of news, which I have kept for the last. I am going to be married to a young lady of small fortune and large accomplishments,—compared with, my age, much youth (not quite 30), and more prudence—some beauty, more sense—uncommon talents, more uncommon temper,—liked by my family, loved by me. If I can say all this three years hence, shall not I have been a fortunate, not to say a wise man?’

He *was* able to say it all at the end of three years and long afterwards; he *was* a fortunate man, and (if the judicious adaptation of means to the grand end of human life, happiness, be wisdom) a wise man. There is positively no accounting for his career without allowing him self-knowledge, keen insight into character, moral courage, and strong volition. He was open to conviction, but, till he was convinced of the erroneousness of an opinion, he retained and acted on it. He never ‘ complied against his will,’ and he resolutely set all wise saws and modern instances at

defiance when he had deliberately made up his mind upon a point.

In a letter from Edgeworth-Town, November 19th, 1798, we find:—

‘In the “Monthly Review” for October there is this anecdote. After the King of Denmark, who was somewhat silly, had left Paris, a Frenchman, who was in company with the Danish ambassador, but did not know him, began to ridicule the king—“*Ma foi, il a une tête, une tête*”—“*Couronnée,*” replied the ambassador, with presence of mind and politeness. My father, who was much delighted with this answer, asked Lovell, Henry, and Sneyd, without telling the right answer, what they would have said :

Lovell : “A head—and a heart, sir.”

Henry : “A head—upon his shoulders.”

Sneyd : “A head—of a king.”

Tell me which answer you like best. Richard will take your “Practical Education” to you.’

‘Practical Education,’ so runs the comment in the Memoir, ‘was published this year (1798), and was praised and abused enough to render the authors immediately famous.’ It was praised in the ‘Monthly Review,’ which devoted two long articles to a careful analysis of the contents. These were of the most miscellaneous description, and include everything that can affect the mental or physical training of a reasonable being. It was abused in the ‘British Critic’ on religious grounds: ‘Here, readers, is education *à la mode*, in the true style of modern philosophy; nearly eight hundred quarto pages on practical education, and not a word on God, religion, Christianity, or a hint that such topics are ever to be mentioned.’ This indignant ultra-Christian might just as well have asserted that there was not a word on courage and chastity, or a hint that such things are ever to be mentioned:—

‘On religion and politics (they say in their preface) we have been silent, because we have no ambition to gain partisans or to make proselytes. The scrutinising eye of

criticism, in looking over our table of contents, will also probably observe that there are no chapters on courage and chastity. To pretend to teach courage to Britons would be as ridiculous as it is unnecessary; and except to those who are exposed to the contagion of foreign manners, we may boast of the superior delicacy of our fair countrywomen.'

Here Edgeworth stands confessed. Their respective shares in the work are stated in the preface. All that relates to the art of teaching to read in the chapter on tasks, the chapters on grammar and classical literature, geography, chronology, arithmetic, geometry, and mechanics, were written by the father, and the rest of the book (more than two-thirds) by the daughter.

Although the name of Edgeworth first acquired literary notoriety by 'Practical Education,' she had already been twice before the public in her own name, and on her own account. 'Letters for Literary Ladies' was published in 1795, and the 'Parent's Assistant' in 1796. Writing to her cousin, Miss Ruxton, she says:— 'I beg, dear Sophy, that you will not call my little stories by the sublime title of my works: I shall else be ashamed when the little mouse comes forth. The stories are printed and bound the same size as "Evenings at Home," and I am afraid you will dislike the title; my father had sent the "Parent's Friend," but Mr. Johnson (the publisher) has degraded it into the "Parent's Assistant" (which I dislike particularly) from association with an old book of arithmetic called the "Tutor's Assistant."'

She first struck into her peculiar vein in 'Castle Rackrent' (1800), in which the habits and manners of that strange variety of the species, the Irish landlord of the eighteenth century, are depicted to the life. The first edition was published without her name, and the first notice of it in the Memoir runs:—'In 1801 a second edition of "Castle Rackrent" was published by Maria Edgeworth, and its success was so triumphant

that some one—I heard his name at the time, but do not now remember it—not only asserted that he was the author, but actually took the trouble to copy out several pages with corrections and erasures as if it was his original MS.’ In November, 1802, Miss Edgeworth writes from Paris:—“‘Castle Rackrent’ has been translated into German, and we saw in a French book an extract from it, giving the wake, the confinement of Lady Cathcart, and *sweeping the stairs with the wig*, as common and universal occurrences in that extraordinary kingdom.’ Swift’s ironical proposal to relieve the Irish poor by converting their children into food for the rich, was seriously adduced by a French writer to illustrate the horrid extremities to which the country had been reduced.

‘Belinda’ was published in 1801, and was highly popular. ‘Moral Tales’ was also published in 1801, with a preface by her father, in which he explains that the tales have been written by her to illustrate the opinions delivered in ‘Practical Education,’ and describes the moral object of each—the most effective mode of repelling readers that could well be contrived by an admiring parent. The ‘Essay on Irish Bulls’ was published in 1802, in their joint names, and was reviewed by Sydney Smith. Of course he could not resist the temptation of quizzing Edgeworth, whom, for that purpose, he insists on treating as the chief, if not sole, partner in the firm of Edgeworth & Co.; but, whilst condemning the rambling style of the composition, his criticism is favourable. ‘The firm drew tears from us in the stories of Little Dominick and of the Irish Beggar who killed his sweetheart. Never was grief more natural or more simple.’ Her own account of this book cannot be passed over :

‘After “Practical Education” the next book which we published in partnership was the “Essay on Irish Bulls.” The first design of this Essay was his (her father’s):—under

the semblance of attack, he wished to show the English public the eloquence, wit, and talents of the lower classes of people in Ireland. Working zealously upon the ideas which he suggested, sometimes what was spoken by him, was afterwards written by me ; or when I wrote my first thoughts, they were corrected and improved by him ; so that no book was ever written more completely in partnership.

‘On this, as on most subjects, whether light or serious, when we wrote together, it would now be difficult, almost impossible, to recollect, which thoughts originally were his, and which were mine. All passages in which there are Latin quotations or classical allusions must be his exclusively, *because I am entirely ignorant of the learned languages*. The notes on the Dublin shoe-black’s metaphorical language, I recollect, are chiefly his.

‘I have heard him tell that story with all the natural, indescribable Irish tones and gestures, of which written language can give but a faint idea. He excelled in imitating the Irish because he never overstepped the modesty or the *assurance* of nature. He marked exquisitely the happy confidence, the shrewd wit of the people, without condescending to produce effect by caricature.’

The speech (she adds) of the poor freeholder to a candidate, in the chapter entitled ‘Irish Wit and Eloquence,’ was made to her father, and written down by her within a few hours from his dictation. In the same chapter are the complaint of the poor widow against her landlord, and his reply, quoted in Campbell’s ‘Lectures on Eloquence,’ under a notion that they were fictitious. She declares them to be unembellished facts : her father being the magistrate before whom the rival orators appeared.

Mrs. Edgeworth relates that a gentleman much interested in improving the breed of Irish cattle, sent, on seeing the advertisement, for the work on Irish bulls : ‘he was rather confounded by the appearance of the classical bull at the top of the first page which I had designed from a gem, and when he began to read the

book he threw it away in disgust : he had purchased it as secretary to the Irish Agricultural Society.'

In the autumn of 1802, during the peace of Amiens, Mr. and Mrs. Edgeworth, their two daughters and Maria, went to Paris, taking Belgium in their way. Her account of their travels is lively and sensible, and they appear to have known almost everybody worth knowing : Madame Recamier, Comte and Comtesse de Segur, La Harpe, Suard, Boissy d'Anglas, Montmorenci, Camille Jordan, Kosciusko, and Lally Tollendal are specially mentioned. One long letter is entirely filled with a visit to Madame de Genlis, who is admirably described. But we can only afford room for Madame d'Houdetot, the Julie of Rousseau, with whom they breakfasted at the Abbé Marellet's :

'Julie is now seventy-two years of age, a thin woman in a little black bonnet : she appeared to me shockingly ugly ; she squints so much that it is impossible to tell which way she is looking : but no sooner did I hear her speak than I began to like her ; and no sooner was I seated beside her, than I began to find in her countenance a most benevolent and agreeable expression. She entered into conversation immediately : her manner invited and could not fail to obtain confidence. She seems as gay and open-hearted as a girl of seventeen. It has been said of her that she not only never did any harm, but never suspected any . . . . I wish I could at seventy-two be such a woman !

'She told me that Rousseau, whilst he was writing so finely on education and leaving his own children in the Foundling Hospital, defended himself with so much eloquence that even those who blamed him in their hearts, could not find tongues to answer him. Once at a dinner at Madame d'Houdetot's there was a fine pyramid of fruit. Rousseau in helping himself took the peach which formed the base of the pyramid, and the rest fell immediately. "Rousseau," said she, "that is what you always do with all our systems, you pull down with a single touch, but who will build up what you pull down ?" I asked if he was grateful for all the kindness shown to him ? "No ; he was ungrateful : he had



a thousand bad qualities, but I turned my attention from them to his genius and the good he had done mankind.”’

One sentence in her general estimate came upon us by surprise: ‘I have never heard any person talk of dress or fashion since we came to Paris, and very little scandal. A scandalmonger would be starved here.’

The grand event of her—of every woman’s—life came to pass at this period. On quitting Paris in March, 1803, she could say for the first time, *Ich habe gelebt und geliebet* (I have lived and loved). Abruptly closing her catalogue of new acquaintance, she adds:

‘Here, my dear aunt, I was interrupted in a manner that will surprise you as much as it surprised me, by the coming in of Monsieur Edelcrantz, a Swedish gentleman, whom we have mentioned to you, of superior understanding and mild manners: he came to offer me his hand and heart!!

‘My heart, you may suppose, cannot return his attachment, for I have seen but very little of him, and have not had time to have formed any judgment, except that I think nothing could tempt me to leave my own dear friends and my own country to live in Sweden.’

In a letter to her cousin on 8th December, 1802 (the proposal was on the 1st), after explaining that M. Edelcrantz was bound to Sweden by ties of duty as strong as those which bound her to Edgeworth-Town, she writes: ‘This is all very reasonable, but reasonable for him only, not for me; and I have never felt anything for him but esteem and gratitude.’ Commenting on this passage, Mrs. Edgeworth says:

‘Maria was mistaken as to her own feelings. She refused M. Edelcrantz, but she felt much more for him than esteem and admiration: she was extremely in love with him. Mr. Edgeworth left her to decide for herself; but she saw too plainly what it would be to us to lose her, and what she would feel at parting from us. She decided rightly for her own future happiness and for that of her family, but she suffered much at the time and long afterwards. While we

were at Paris, I remember that in a shop where Charlotte and I were making some purchases, Maria sat apart absorbed in thought, and so deep in reverie, that when her father came in and stood opposite to her, she did not see him till he spoke to her, when she started and burst into tears. . . . I do not think she repented of her refusal, or regretted her decision; she was well aware that she could not have made him happy, that she would not have suited his position at the Court of Stockholm, and that her want of beauty might have diminished his attachment. It was better perhaps she should think so, as it calmed her mind, but from what I saw of M. Edelcrantz, I think he was a man capable of really valuing her. I believe that he was much attached to her, and deeply mortified at her refusal. He continued to reside in Sweden after the abdication of his master, and was always distinguished for his high character and great abilities. He never married. He was, except very fine eyes, remarkably plain.'

This is an interesting and instructive episode. It lets in a flood of light upon those passages of her writings which inculcate the stern control of the feelings,—the never-ceasing vigilance with which prudence and duty are to stand sentinel over the heart. So then, she had actually undergone the hard trials she imposes and describes. They best can paint them who can feel them most. She was no Madame d'Aubray, with ideas of self-sacrifice admirably adapted for others' uses but disagreeably unfitted for her own; and before setting down her precepts of self-command under temptation, she had tested them. Caroline Percy (in 'Patronage') controlling her love for Count Altenberg, is Maria Edgeworth subduing *her* love for the Chevalier Edelcrantz.

On the 27th January, 1803, Edgeworth received a peremptory order from the French Government to quit Paris, and he went to Passy with his daughter, whilst his friends investigated the cause. It turned out to be a belief that he was the brother of the Abbé Edgeworth, who had attended Louis Seize on the

scaffold. So soon as the exact degree of relationship was made known through Lord Whitworth, the order was withdrawn; but they received private information which induced them to leave France, just time enough to get away. Lovell, the eldest son, was stopped on his journey from Geneva to Paris, and remained a *détenu* till the end of the war in 1814.

'After our return, Maria immediately occupied herself with preparing for the press "Popular Tales," which were published this year (1803). She also began "Émilie de Coulanges," "Madame de Fleury," and "Ennui," and wrote "Leonora," with the romantic purpose I have already mentioned.' The romantic purpose was to please the Chevalier Edelcrantz. It was written in the style he preferred; and 'the idea of what he would think of it (says Mrs. Edgeworth) was, I believe, present to her in every page she wrote. She never heard that he had even read it.' She also found time to write 'Griselda' at odd moments in her own room.

'Popular Tales' appeared in 1804, with, as usual, a preface by the father, which might have been spared: e. g. 'Burke supposes that there are eighty thousand readers in Great Britain, nearly one hundredth part of its inhabitants. Out of these we may calculate that ten thousand are nobility, clergy, or gentlemen of the learned professions. Of seventy thousand readers which remain, there are many who might be amused and instructed by books which were not professedly adapted to the classes which have been enumerated. With this view the following volumes have been composed.' We can hardly think so, even on the paternal assurance. The heroes and heroines do not belong to the nobility, clergy, or gentry, it is true. They are mostly farmers or tradespeople. Leonard Ludgate, in 'Out of Debt out of Danger,' is the only son and heir of a London haberdasher, who marries Miss Bella Perkins, a would-

be fine lady.<sup>1</sup> But is this a reason why these tales should be less adapted, professedly or unprofessedly, to the upper ten thousand? Is the class of readers determined by the rank in life of the persons who figure in a novel? Do the nobility throw it aside disdainfully when they find that it does not deal with nobility, or do people of humble birth, or ungenteel callings, lay it down with despair when it brings them face to face with a clergyman, a barrister, or a lord? Some such notion was obviously in Mr. Edgeworth's mind when he penned this preface.

The first series of 'Tales of Fashionable Life,' published in 1809, contained 'Ennui,' 'Madame de Fleury,' 'The Dun,' 'Manœuvring,' and 'Almeria;' the second, published in 1812, 'Vivian,' 'The Absentee,' 'Madame de Fleury,' and 'Émilie de Coulanges.' 'The Absentee' originally formed part of 'Patronage,' where Lord and Lady Tipperary figured as patients of Dr. Percy, and 'Patronage' was to have formed part of the second series of the Tales; but the impatience of the publisher induced her to lay aside 'Patronage,' and (with a change of name) fill the required space in the series with 'The Absentee.' 'Patronage,' published in 1813, had been long upon the stocks. Its history is narrated in her continuation of her father's Memoirs:

'Among others written many years ago, was one called "the History of the Freeman Family." In 1787, my father, to amuse Mrs. Elizabeth Edgeworth, when she was recovering after the birth of one of my brothers, related to us every evening, when we assembled in her room, part of this story, which I believe he invented as he went on. It was found so interesting by his audience, that they regretted much that it should not be preserved, and I in consequence began to write it from memory. The plan, founded on the story of two families, one making their way in the world by indepen-

<sup>1</sup> It is a coincidence worth mentioning that the plot of this story is in parts identical with that of 'Maison Neuve,' a comedy, by M. Victorien Sardou, author of 'La Famille Bénéton.'

dent efforts, the other by mean arts and by courting the great, was, long afterwards, the groundwork of "Patronage." The character of Lord Oldborough was added, but most of the others remained as my father originally described them: his hero and heroine were in greater difficulties than mine, more in love, and consequently more interesting, and the whole story was infinitely more entertaining. I mention this, because some critics took it for granted that he wrote parts of "Patronage," of which, in truth, he did not write, to the best of my recollection, any single passage; and it is remarkable, that they have ascribed to him all those faults which were exclusively mine: the original design, which was really his, and which I altered, had all that merit of lively action and interest, in which mine has been found deficient.'

It is recorded, in proof of the extent to which 'Clarissa' had fastened on the public mind before the appearance of the concluding volumes, that Richardson received letter after letter passionately entreating him to spare the heroine the crowning misery, or, if that could not be, to reform Lovelace and marry him to his victim. Remonstrances of the same kind appear to have been addressed to the author of 'Patronage' by tender-hearted readers, who could not bear to see Mr. Percy in prison, and were especially hurt by Caroline's refusal to go abroad with Count Altenberg. In the third edition (1815) these alleged blots were removed, although she had scruples touching material changes after the publication of a work. In a note to the 'Contrast,' she had said: 'Those who wish to know the history of all the wedding clothes of the parties, may have their curiosity gratified by directing a line of inquiry, post paid, to the editor herself.' Referring to the letters of inquiry thus invited, she writes:—

'I have had another odd letter signed by three young ladies, Clarissa Craven, Rachel Biddle, and Eliza Finch, who, after sundry compliments in very pretty language, and with all the appearance of seriousness, beg that I will do

them the favour to satisfy the curiosity they feel about the wedding dresses of the Frankland family in the "Contrast." I have answered in a way that will stand for either jest or earnest; I have said that at a sale of Admiral Tipsey's smuggled goods, Mrs. Hungerford bought French cambric muslin wedding gowns for the brides, the collars trimmed in the most becoming manner, as a Monmouth milliner assured me, with Valenciennes lace, from Admiral Tipsey's spoils. I have given all the particulars of the bridegroom's accoutrements, and signed myself the young ladies' "obedient servant and perhaps dupe."

In May, 1813, the family paid a flying visit to London, and there is an admirable letter from her, filling between seven and eight pages, describing their reception in the best houses. On this and subsequent occasions, she had been accused of an undue leaning to rank and fashion; but the fashionable world of her day included celebrities of all sorts—literary, scientific, artistic, and political—as well as people of birth, fortune, and connection. The most cherished of her friends were those whose names were and are habitually associated with intellectual excellence, refinement, and grace. The Marchioness of Lansdowne, Lady Crewe, Lady Elizabeth Whitbread, Miss Fox, Mrs. Hope (Lady Beresford), the Misses Berry, Miss Catharine Fanshawe, Lady Spencer, Lady Charlotte Lindsay, the Countess of Charleville, Lydia White, Mrs. Siddons, Lady Milbanke, were of the number. She speaks thus of another, whom she had known from girlhood :—

'Charming, amiable, Lady Wellington! as she truly said of herself, she is always "Kitty Pakenham to her friends;" after comparison with crowds of other *beaux-esprits*, fine ladies and fashionable *scramblers* for notoriety, her dignified graceful simplicity rises in our opinion, and we feel it with more conviction of its superiority. She showed us her delightful children. I have been standing in my dressing-gown writing on the top of a chest of drawers, and now I must dress for a breakfast at Lady Davy's, where we are to

meet Lord Byron; but I must say that at the third place where we were let in yesterday, Lady Wellington's, we spent by far the most agreeable half-hour of the day.'

The Edgeworths were persons of birth, fortune, and connection, in addition to their literary claims, and simply assumed their natural place when they joined the aristocratic circles, which eagerly courted them. There is nothing, therefore, at all odd, much less reprehensible, in her notices of London life being principally confined to the precincts of May Fair. At all events, they were not confined to fine ladies. Speaking of the same period, Mrs. Edgeworth says: 'One day, coming too late to dinner at Mr. Horner's, we found Dr. Parr very angry at our having delayed and then interrupted dinner; but he ended by giving Maria his blessing.' This is probably the occasion on which Edgeworth boasted before Lord Byron of having put down Parr. She adds: 'We unfortunately missed seeing Madame d'Arblay, and we left London before the arrival of Madame de Staël.' This falls in with a story printed in Moore's diary:—

'In talking of getting into awkward scrapes at dinner tables, Lady Dunmore mentioned a circumstance of the kind in which Rogers was concerned. It was at the time when Madame de Staël was expected in London, and somebody at table (there being a large party) asked when she was likely to arrive. "Not till Miss Edgeworth is gone," replied Rogers: "Madame de Staël would not like two stars shining at the same time." The words were hardly out of his mouth, when he saw a gentleman rise at the other end of the table, and say in a solemn tone: "*Madame la Baronne de Staël est incapable d'une telle bassesse.*" It was Auguste de Staël, her son, whom Rogers had never before seen.'

Two curious traits of children, who have since fully justified the expectations formed of them, were set down by her in 1813:—

'April 25, 1813.—I enclose the Butterfly's Ball for Sophy,

and a letter to the King written by Dr. (Sir Henry) Holland when six years old : his father found him going with it to the post. (This letter was an offer from Master Holland to raise a regiment. He and some of his little comrades had got a drum and a flag, and used to go through the manual exercise. It was a pity the letter did not reach the King : he would have been delighted with it.)'

'*August, 1818.*—We have just seen a journal by a little boy of eight years old, of a voyage from England to Sicily ; the boy is Lord Mahon's son, Lord Carrington's grandson. It is one of the best journals I ever read, full of facts : exactly the writing of a child, but a very clever child.'

This very clever child is the present Earl Stanhope.

'Harrington' and 'Ormond,' with 'Thoughts on Bores' (two volumes), was published in May, 1817, with the usual preface by Edgeworth; the last he was destined to write. He died on the 13th of June following ; and, partly from grief, partly from a complaint in her eyes, Miss Edgeworth wrote hardly any letters for many months. As soon as she was sufficiently recovered from the shock, she set to work to complete her father's Memoirs, which she had to take up and continue from 1782. The whole of the second volume is by her. The work is amusing : many incidents and traits of character are recorded in it, which would have left a chasm in her own biography had they been lost ; but it was the least successful of their joint productions, and her part was perceptibly impaired by its being too much a labour of love. It was criticised in the 'Quarterly Review' (Oct. 1820) with extreme bitterness, and in a manner (whatever the intention) particularly adapted to give pain, not only to Maria, but to the entire family ; for the four marriages (to which the reviewer tried hard to add a fifth) were made the mark of much moral indignation, real or simulated. Dumont wrote to her : 'If by accident you have not read this infamous article, I should advise you not to read it, and to abandon it to public contempt.' Mrs. Marcet



spoke of it as a subject which made her blood boil, and 'roused every feeling of contempt and abhorrence.' Miss Edgeworth wrote at once to her aunt from Paris (Nov. 1820): 'Never lose another night's sleep or another moment's thought on the "Quarterly Review." I have never read, and never will read it.' She kept her word.

Having finished the Memoirs, she determined to indulge herself in what she had long projected, a visit to Paris with her two young sisters (by the fourth marriage) Fanny and Harriet, and we find them settled in the Place du Palais Bourbon on April 29, 1820.

In one of her letters from Paris, she says: 'I find always when I come to the end of my paper that I have not told you several entertaining things I had treasured up for you. I had a history of a man and woman from Cochin China which must now be squeezed almost to death.' This will be just our case. We shall come to the end of our paper without being able to bring in a tithe of the entertaining, and better than entertaining, things we had noted down: we have more than one history which must be squeezed almost to death or never live at all in our pages. Her letters sparkle with brilliant names, and, in most instances, with fresh anecdotes or reminiscences attached to them. The doors of all the leading houses flew open at her approach, including those of the Fauxbourg St. Germain; for the connexion with the Abbé Edgeworth had now become a safe passport to the houses of the ancient *noblesse*. The French always spoke of him as the Abbé de Firmont, a name he had taken on account of the difficulty they found in the *w* and *th*; Edgvatz being their nearest approximation to the sound. At one house, a valet, after Maria had several times repeated 'Edgeworth,' exclaimed, '*Ah, je renonce à ça*;' and, throwing open the door of the salon, announced, '*Madame Maria et Mesdemoiselles ses sœurs.*' Byron

speaks of some Russian or Polish names as 'names that would descend to posterity if posterity could but pronounce them.' Many English names are exposed to the same disadvantage. An English traveller (the writer) spent half-an-hour one evening at Tieck's at Dresden, in 1834, vainly endeavouring to teach some German ladies how to pronounce 'Wordsworth.' Few of them got nearer than 'Vudvutt.'

The form of the visiting cards of the party, adopted (she says) after due deliberation, was 'Madame Maria Edgeworth et Mesdemoiselles ses sœurs.' Her sisters were attractive girls, and she had no reason to complain of being over-weighted with them, particularly at Paris, where a guest more or less, even at a dinner party, was never so serious an affair as we are wont to make of it. A notion of their Parisian life may be conveyed in a brief extract :

'We have seen Mademoiselle Mars twice or thrice rather, in the "Mariage de Figaro" and in the little pieces of "Le Jaloux sans Amour" and "La Jeunesse de Henri Cinq," and admire her exceedingly. In petit comité the other night at the Duchesse d'Escars', a discussion took place between the Duchesse de la Force, Marmont, and Pozzo di Borgo, on the *bon et mauvais ton* of different expressions—*bonne société* is an expression *bourgeoise*—you may say *bonne compagnie* or *la haute société*. "*Voilà des nuances*," as Madame d'Escars said. Such a wonderful jabbering as these grandees made about these small matters. It put me in mind of a conversation in the "World" on good company, which we all used to admire.'

Yet Marmont and Pozzo di Borgo were grandees of no common order. She met all the scientific men of note at Cuvier's, who gave a good instance of Bonaparte's insisting on a decided answer. He asked me, 'Faut-il introduire le sucre de betterave en France?' 'D'abord, Sire, il faut songer à vos colonies.'—'Faut-il avoir le sucre de betterave en France?' 'Mais,

Sire, il faut examiner.'—'Bah! je le demanderai à Berthollet.'

She says of Benjamin Constant :—

'I do not like him at all : his countenance, voice, manner, and conversation are all disagreeable to me. He is a fair, *whithky*-looking man (*sic*), very near-sighted, with spectacles which seem to pinch his nose. . . . He has been well called the *héros des brochures*. We sat beside one another, and I think we felt a mutual antipathy. On the other side of me was Royer Collard, suffering with toothache and swelled face ; but notwithstanding the distortion of the swelling, the natural expression of his countenance and the strength and sincerity of his soul made their way, and the frankness of his character and the plain superiority of his talents were manifest in five minutes' conversation.'

After leaving Paris they made a short tour in Switzerland, and passed some delightful days at Geneva during what has been termed its Augustan age. Dumont acted as their guide, and one of their first dinners was at Dr. and Mrs. Marcet's, with Dumont, M. and Madame Prévost, M. de la Rive, M. Bonstetten (Gray's friend), and M. de Candolle. During a visit to Coppet, where the Duc and Duchesse de Broglie then were, she is able to exclaim exultingly, 'Here we are in the very apartments occupied by M. Necker, opening into what is now the library, but what was once that theatre on which Madame de Staël used to act her own *Corinne*' . . . 'There is something inexpressibly melancholy, awful, in this house, in these rooms, where the thought continually occurs, Here genius was! here was ambition! here all the great struggles of the passions! here was Madame de Staël!'

With Madame de Staël and Madame de Broglie (it is added in the Memoir) Maria was particularly happy; and there are two anecdotes of Madame de Staël which we cannot make up our minds to forego. The first was related by Dumont :

'One day M. Suard, as he entered the saloon of the hôtel Necker, saw Madame Necker going out of the room, and Mademoiselle Necker standing in a melancholy attitude with tears in her eyes. Guessing that Madame Necker had been lecturing her, Suard went towards her to comfort her, and whispered, "*Une caresse du papa vous dédommagera bien de tout ça.*" She, immediately, wiping the tears from her eyes, answered, "*Eh ! oui, Monsieur, mon père songe à mon bonheur présent, mamma songe à mon avenir.*" There was more than presence of mind, there was heart and soul and greatness of mind in this answer.'

Miss Edgeworth took down from the Duchess of Wellington's own lips a dialogue between herself and Madame de Staël on a remarkable occasion. The Duchess had purposely avoided making the acquaintance of Madame de Staël in England, not knowing how she might be received by the Bourbons after the Restoration. Finding on her arrival at Paris that Corinne was well received, she invited her to her first assembly. She came, and walking up straight to the Duchess with flashing eyes, began :

'Eh ! Madame la Duchesse, vous ne vouliez pas donc faire ma connaissance en Angleterre ?

'Non, Madame, je ne le voulais pas.

'Eh ! comment, Madame ? Pourquoi donc ?

'C'est que je vous craignais, Madame.

'Vous me craignez, Madame la Duchesse ?

'Non, Madame, je ne vous crains plus.

'Madame de Staël threw her arms around her : Ah, je vous adore.'

The party returned to England at the beginning of December, 1820, and we next find them at Bowood, where Miss Edgeworth was a frequent and welcome guest. Once when Moore met her there, after recording in his Diary the effect of his singing (which he never omits to record) on Dugald Stewart, he adds : 'Miss Edgeworth, too, was much affected. This is a delightful triumph, to touch the higher spirits.' At a

later period, in reference to an invitation to breakfast at Rogers', he sets down: 'Went, and found Miss Edgeworth, Luttrell, Lord Normanby and Sharpe. Miss Edgeworth, with all her cleverness, anything but agreeable. The moment any one begins to speak, off she starts too, seldom more than a sentence behind them, and in general contrives to distance every speaker. Neither does what she say, though of course very sensible, at all make up for this over-activity of tongue.' Moore (like Rogers) judged people subjectively, not objectively—from his own feelings, sympathies or antipathies, not from their qualities, merits or demerits. We are as certain as if we had been present that Miss Edgeworth put him out, anticipated him in a favourite story, or added a touch of Irish humour which he had let slip. From personal recollection of her manner of conversing, we can state positively that it was utterly remote from eagerness for display or over-activity of tongue. Lord Byron says, her conversation was as quiet as herself. Lockhart, who was fastidious enough in all conscience, was delighted with her; and Scott writes (in 1827):—'It is scarcely possible to say more of this very remarkable person than that she not only completely answered, but exceeded, the expectations which I had formed. I am particularly pleased with the *naïveté* and good-humoured ardour of mind which she unites with such formidable powers of acute observation.'

Fashion, in its best sense, is essentially a discriminating and almost a democratic principle; it unscrupulously overrides birth, fortune, and even fame, for purely personal distinction and agreeability. We have known many a lion and lioness dropped after a short trial. We never knew one retain the coveted position long by mere literary celebrity, much less by restless anxiety for display. The object of the most refined and cultivated society of London and Paris, in their

ordinary intercourse, is not to instruct or be instructed, to dazzle or be dazzled, but to please and be pleased. Now, Miss Edgeworth was pre-eminently the fashion, year after year, and she wisely acted on Colton's maxim in 'Lacon': 'In all societies it is advisable to associate, if possible, with the highest. In the grand theatre of human life, a *box-ticket* takes you through the house.' During her visit to London in 1822, we find her spending a morning in Newgate with Mrs. Fry, receiving Sir Humphry Davy in the afternoon, taken by Whitbread to the ladies' gallery in the House of Commons in the evening, and finishing with Almack's in its heyday :

'Fanny and Harriet have been with me at that grand exclusive paradise of fashion, Almack's. Observe that the present Duchess of Rutland,' who had been a few months away from town and had offended the lady patronesses by not visiting them, could not at her utmost need get a ticket from any one of them and was kept out, to her amazing mortification. This may give you some idea of the importance attached to admission to Almack's. Kind Mrs. Hope got tickets for us from Lady Gwydir and Lady Cowper (Lady Palmerston) : the patronesses can only give tickets to those whom they personally know ; on that plea they avoided the Duchess of Rutland's application, she had not visited them, — "they really did not know her grace," and Lady Cowper swallowed a camel for me, because she did not really know me : I had met her but had never been introduced to her till I saw her at Almack's.

'Fanny and Harriet were beautifully dressed: their heads by Lady Lansdowne's hair-dresser, Trichot; Mrs. Hope lent Harriet a wreath of her own French roses. Fanny was said by many to be, if not the prettiest, the most elegant-looking young woman in the room, and certainly "elegance, birth, and fortune were there assembled," as the newspapers would truly say.'

<sup>1</sup> It was the Duchess of Northumberland, who, not being on the visiting list of a patroness, and not caring to supply the omission, was refused a ticket. This was told the writer by Lady Palmerston.

Lord Londonderry hurries up to talk of 'Castle Rackrent' and Ireland, and introduces them to Lady Londonderry, who invites them to one of her grandest parties. And then they become 'very intimate' with Wollaston and Kater, Mr. Warburton, and Dr. and Mrs. Somerville. 'They and Dr. and Mrs. Marcet form the most agreeable as well as scientific society in London.' And then they dine with Lydia White, and become acquainted with Mrs. Siddons, who relates an incident of her career which it was worth going a long way to hear from her own lips :

'She gave us the history of her first acting of Lady Macbeth, and of her resolving, in the sleep scene, to lay down the candlestick, contrary to the precedent of Mrs. Pritchard and all the traditions, before she began to wash her hands and say, "Out vile spot!" Sheridan knocked violently at her door during the five minutes she had desired to have entirely to herself, to compose her spirits before the play began. He burst in, and prophesied that she would ruin herself for ever if she persevered in this resolution to lay down the candlestick! She persisted, however, in her determination, succeeded, was applauded, and Sheridan begged her pardon. She described well the awe she felt, and the power of the excitement given to her by the sight of Burke, Fox, Sheridan, and Sir Joshua Reynolds in the pit.'

To excuse her constant yearning for the stage after her formal retirement, she was wont to say that nothing in life could equal the excitement caused by that sea of upturned faces in the pit. This story leads naturally to one told by Sir Humphry Davy :

'Sir Humphry repeated to us a remarkable criticism of Buonaparte's on Talma's acting: "You don't play Nero well; you gesticulate too much; you speak with too much vehemence. A despot does not need all that; he need only pronounce. *'Il sait qu'il se suffit.'*" "And," added Talma, who told this to Sir Humphry, "Buonaparte, as he said this, folded his arms in his well-known manner, and stood as if his attitude expressed the sentiment."'

Before hastening (and we must hasten) to the conclusion, we may mention, in passing, that the third volume of the *Memoir* contains a long correspondence with Captain Basil Hall, to whom she acted as literary adviser, and an account of an expedition to Connemara with Sir Culling and Lady Smith, which rivals the best Irish sketches in her books. She complained bitterly of the loss of her own literary monitor and coadjutor, and shrank from completing and publishing much which, under his approving eye, she would have given to the world. We have heard on good authority that she left chests full of stories in manuscript which the family have refrained from printing. Her literary labours do not appear to have been very profitable. Lockhart, who acted for her in some of her later arrangements with publishers, states that she never realized for the best of her Irish tales a third of the sum (700*l.*) given for *Waverley*. Yet *Waverley* on its first appearance was called a 'Scotch Castle Rackrent.'<sup>1</sup>

'Harry and Lucy' was begun by her father and his second wife Honora in 1787, to illustrate his notions of practical education. Day offered to assist, and with this view wrote 'Sandford and Merton,' which was first designed for a short story to be inserted in 'Harry and Lucy.' Edgeworth, therefore, had some reason for boasting that the public owed 'Sandford and Merton' to him. This is not the first time that a work of lasting reputation has been produced in the same manner. 'Eothen' was begun to assist the author of 'The Crescent and the Cross,' and was at one time intended to appear as a kind of supplement to that work.

There is a letter from Scott to Joanna Baillie, in which he writes :

'I have not the pen of our friend, Miss Edgeworth, who writes all the while she laughs, talks, eats, and drinks, and I

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Scott*, vol. iii. p. 124. *The Quarterly Review*, vol. ii. p. 356.



believe, though I do not pretend to be so far in the secret, all the time she sleeps, too. She has good luck in having a pen which walks at once so unweariedly and so well. I do not, however, quite like her last book on Education ("Harry and Lucy"), considered as a general work. She should have limited the title to "Education in Natural Philosophy," or some such term, for there is no great use in teaching children in general to roof houses or build bridges, which, after all, a carpenter or a mason does a great deal better at 2s. 6d. a day. . . . Your ordinary Harry should be kept to his grammar, and your Lucy, of most common occurrence, would be best employed on her sampler, instead of wasting wood and cutting their fingers, which I am convinced they did, though their historian says nothing of it.'

The fault of all her and her father's children's books is that they exact too much from both pupil and teacher, and greatly overestimate the probable or even possible results of their system. They have the fault of Lord Chesterfield's Letters. They place no bounds to what education can effect. This is more especially the defect of 'Frank'—a work, in other respects, of signal excellence, which well deserves to retain its rank as the first of English boys' books.

Scott's visitors were wont to express the same wonder at the unseen and unaccountable performances of his pen which he expresses of the unwearied walk of hers. The difference between them in this respect was that he got up early and wrote for two or three hours before breakfast, after which he felt at full liberty to amuse himself with his guests. She generally sat down to her writing-desk (a small and plain one made by her father) in the common sitting-room, soon after breakfast and wrote till luncheon, her chief meal; then did some needlework, took a short drive, and wrote for the rest of the afternoon. She probably varied her habits during Scott's visit to Edgeworth-Town.

On May 7th, 1849, being then in her eighty-third

year, she writes to Mrs. Richard Buller : ' I am heartily obliged and delighted by your being such a goose, and Richard such a gander, as to be frightened out of your wits at my going up the ladder to take off the top of the clock.' She actually had mounted the ladder, as if emulous of the fate of that old Countess of Desmond, who broke her neck by a fall from a cherry-tree. On the 22nd she was taken suddenly ill with pain in the region of her heart, and expired within a few hours in the arms of her step-mother, the author of the Memoir.

The general character of Miss Edgeworth's productions was so exhaustively discussed in her lifetime, and the traditional estimate of them is so fixed and unanimous, that little remains for us but to take a retrospective glance at their prominent features—to sum up her many merits, and few demerits, as one of the most fertile, popular, and influential English novelists of her age. All are agreed in ranking amongst her qualities—the finest powers of observation : the most penetrating good sense : a high moral tone, consistently maintained : inexhaustible fertility of invention : firmness and delicacy of touch : undeviating rectitude of purpose : varied and accurate knowledge : a clear flexible style : exquisite humour, and extraordinary mastery of pathos. What she wants, what she could not help wanting with her matter-of-fact understanding and practical turn of mind, are poetry, romance, passion, sentiment. In her judgment, the better part of life and conduct is discretion. She has not only no toleration for self-indulgence or criminal weakness : she has no sympathy with lofty, defiant, uncalculating heroism or greatness : she never snatches a grace beyond the reach of prudence : she never arrests us by scenes of melodramatic intensity, or hurries us along breathless by a rapid train of exciting incidents to an artistically prepared catastrophe. Neither does

she shine in historic painting; and she would have failed in 'high art' had she aspired to it. Her gaze was too constantly fixed on the surface to admit of much depth or breadth of thought; and she was deficient in the art of combining more than a limited number of scenes and characters into a plot.

The late Earl of Dudley, a fervent admirer, christened her the Anti-sentimental Novelist; and Madame de Staël was reported to have said, '*que Miss Edgeworth était digne de l'enthousiasme, mais qu'elle s'est perdue dans la triste utilité.*' When this was repeated during the visit at Coppet in 1820, the Duchesse de Broglie declared, '*Ma mère n'a jamais dit cela; elle en était incapable.*' For all that, we suspect she did say it. The internal evidence is strong, and the remark is partly founded in truth. Miss Edgeworth is worthy of the highest admiration of the soberer kind: she does not inspire enthusiasm; and she would have been more useful, as well as a thousandfold more attractive, had she thought and written less about utility.

Goethe was wont to maintain that the writer of a work of fiction should take no thought of the moral: that he should keep true to nature and leave the moral to take care of itself. This may be accepted as a sound canon of criticism, subject to a limitation obviously understood. The poet, dramatist, or novelist may safely give the rein to invention under the conscious control of good feeling and good sense. It is not his or her business to vindicate the ways of God to man; much less to warp events in such a manner as to vindicate them. In the case of a story-book for children, there is no great harm in playing Providence in this fashion; for the parent or master can so manage the distribution of rewards and punishments as that good or bad behaviour shall be speedily followed by the fitting results. Only, when goodness is uniformly productive of extra holidays, pocket-money, and play-

things, this is much the same as bribing or coaxing children to be good. But in stories for grown-up people, corresponding results can rarely be brought about without shocking probability, or jarring against the religious faith which looks to the next world to redress the injustice and inequality of this. The folly of trying to fathom the designs of the Infinite is well exposed in the Arabian fable which supplied the story of Parnell's Hermit and is employed (in 'Zadig') with his wonted felicity by Voltaire. The third Epistle of the 'Essay on Man' is a poetical paraphrase of the same argument.

In one of the Popular Tales, entitled 'To-morrow,' the hero is within an ace of ruin by arriving too late to sail with the Chinese Embassy to which he is attached. In travelling, the late Lord Alvanley was almost always behind his time, and, to a laughing remonstrance from a fellow traveller (the writer), replied, 'Why, the fact is, these dilatory habits of mine saved my life. I was about to embark at Trieste for Constantinople : my carriage and servants were on board : I arrived too late ; the ship sailed without me and was never heard of again. I am now unpunctual upon principle.'

The same hero (in 'To-morrow') fails in a literary career, for which he is well fitted by knowledge and capacity, because he is always procrastinating either the composition or the publication of his books. But Dr. Johnson seldom began the required paper for the Rambler till there was just time enough to save the post and not time enough to revise what he had written. Sheridan boasted that he never did to-day what, by any device, he could put off till to-morrow ; and we could name more than one successful author, now living, who has sorely tried the patience of an expectant public by his dilatoriness.

Moore one day asked Rogers what he did when people, who wanted his autograph, requested him to

sign a sentence with his name. 'Oh, I give them "Ill-gotten wealth never prospers," or, "Evil communications corrupt good manners" or, "Virtue is its own reward."' Luttrell broke in: 'Then the more shame for you to circulate such delusions. Do not the ill-gotten wealth of \* \* \* and \* \* \* prosper? Haven't Tom Duncombe and De Ros, whose communications are all evil, the best manners of any men of our acquaintance? Look at our honest, excellent friend, \* \* \* to whom you, Rogers, lent ten pounds yesterday. Is virtue its own reward in his case? Or, when Pitt spouted Horace and talked of involving himself in his virtue, was he the less eager to be First Lord of the Treasury again?'

Now, Miss Edgeworth would not have hesitated a moment to take either one of these maxims as her starting point; and her father would have written a preface to announce that the moral had been conclusively and satisfactorily worked out. Their mode of working out the moral of 'Virtue is its own reward' would be to picture Virtue richly attired, crowned with laurel, and bearing a cornucopia in her hand.

Do we not all know hundreds who have got on by patronage? or who have got their first step through a patron, and with occasional help of the same kind have risen steadily and creditably to the top of the tree? The fact is notorious, but unless it can be ignored or kept in the background, it is extremely difficult to demonstrate by a probable succession of events that self-reliance is the only sure or honourable stepping-stone to success. The fictitious narrative will be impaired by the daily observation of the reality, and impaired in exact proportion to the completeness with which it is made to correspond with the premeditated end. Thus, in 'Patronage,' the most indulgent or indifferent reader will be startled by the sudden and simultaneous discomfiture or disgrace of the entire family who have obtained

an excellent start by interest. The Dean, the best of the lot, is let off with the lightest sentence. He is married for money to a woman whom he had described the day before as 'an old, ugly, cross, avaricious devil.' This is *his* destiny. The colonel, on foreign service, is out shooting when an important order arrives, sent home under arrest, and cashiered. The diplomatist is detected in a piece of treachery to his official patron, and dismissed. The beauty, 'Georgy,' after missing marriage after marriage, is sent to try her fortune with faded charms to India. A conspiracy for raising money by the sale of places through the instrumentality of forged letters is brought home to the manœuvring mother; and the father is left, another Marius amongst ruins, lamenting over the failure of his system and his schemes.

Scott clears the ground for the desired conclusion of 'Rob Roy' in the same summary style. Of Sir Hildebrand's four sons, the quarrelsome one is killed in a duel; the sot dies of a fever caused by a drinking bout; the horse-jockey breaks his neck in an attempt to show off a foundered blood-mare; and the fool is killed at Preston fighting bravely for a cause he could never be made to understand. But Scott, far from writing towards a preappointed moral, commonly began without a plan. Miss Edgeworth had entered into a voluntary engagement to connect the downfall of the Falcons with their method of rising, and no logical or necessary connection is made out.

Miss Edgeworth is not satisfied with ordering events: she also frames characters to match. 'Murad the Unlucky' is an example. No man of observation and experience will deny that there are such things as good luck and ill luck; and no man of sense will dissent from Jeremy Taylor's axiom that 'life is like playing at tables: the luck is not in our power, but the playing the game is.' Whether success in the world depends

most on prudence or fortune, the point in dispute between the Sultan and the Vizier of the tale is one requiring the utmost delicacy of handling. But Murad is simply a foolish, weak, careless, idle, drunken fellow, who goes out of his way to get into trouble; whilst his brother, Saladin the Lucky, is industry, sobriety, sagacity, firmness and foresight personified. The terms 'lucky' and 'unlucky' have no application to such men. There is no good luck in saving a city from incendiaries by courage and presence of mind: there is no ill luck in setting fire to a ship by leaving a lighted pipe on a bale of cotton.<sup>1</sup>

In 'Patronage,' again, the rival families are so unequal that they cannot be handicaped for the race. The one has all the good qualities: the other almost all the bad. Reverse the position: encumber the Percys (to borrow a Johnsonian phrase) with any amount of help; leave the Falconers entirely to their own resources; and the sole difference in the result under any easily conceivable circumstances will be, that the Percys will rise more rapidly and the Falconers never rise at all. Indeed, it might have been better for the plot if they never had risen. The sickening pang of hope deferred is the appropriate punishment of placehunting, which ought not to be associated with even temporary success.

'Toil, envy, want, the *patron*, and the jail.'

Boswell states that Johnson first wrote *garret*, 'but after experiencing the uneasiness which Lord Chesterfield's

<sup>1</sup> The late Duke of N. was expatiating on what he termed his ill luck through life; and gave as an illustration that he, a good horseman, should be the one Lord-Lieutenant thrown off his horse in the presence of the Queen amongst the glittering cortége assembled to accompany her Majesty to the first volunteer review. 'But why, duke, did you suffer yourself to be dragged on the ground in that manner instead of letting go the rein?' 'Oh, my horse, though such a handsome, spirited creature, was so vicious a brute, that I feared he would fly, kicking and biting, amongst the suite.' There it was. Why did he ride a vicious brute on such an occasion?

fallacious patronage made him feel, he dismissed the word from the sad group and replaced it by *patron*.'

The intended effect of 'The Lottery' is similarly impaired. The hero gains a 5,000*l.* prize, which unsettles his habits and blights his life. There are numerous instances in which a similar catastrophe has been produced by an unexpected inheritance. Yet not one poor man in a hundred would refuse a fortune, or refrain from putting into the lottery, for fear of being demoralised by wealth. The human mind is so constituted that we all think we can separate the evil from the good, and no experience avails us but our own. Theodore Hook regularly took a ticket in the Austrian lottery in the hope of gaining the castle on the Danube. This was his mirage in the desert, his *château en Espagne*, for years; and a good story might be made out of the shifts to which he was frequently put to raise the money, and his feverish agitation when the time for drawing was at hand.

In stories where Miss Edgeworth clogs herself with a moral, she recalls the runner in the German legend who ties his legs together to moderate his pace; and when she keeps pressing considerations of utility on the reader, she may be compared to a host, who, whilst you are admiring the undulating variety of his grounds or enjoying a fine prospect, requests your attention to his mode of draining and fencing, or drags you away to inspect the plan of a projected almshouse or school-room.

To a totally different category belong novels like the 'Absentee,' in which the struggles and mortifications of an Irish family of rank in the fine world of London are held up as a warning; or those which, like Joanna Baillie's Plays on the Passions, are composed for the development of character or the exposure of any given mental malady with its cure. In 'Ennui,' Lord Glen-thorn, the prototype of *L'Homme Blasé* ('Used Up')



is a dramatic conception of a high order ; and the scenes through which he is led, independently of their merit as representations of manners, are admirably adapted to exhibit the peculiar state of feeling contracted by satiety. There are passages in which the young English peer recalls Alfieri in phases of mind described in his autobiography ; but, as we learn from the letters, Miss Edgeworth cautiously avoided confounding fact with fiction ; and it is only in the most ambitious of her portraits that she can be accused of transgressing sound principles of art. Lord Dudley, who reviewed 'Patronage,' in the Quarterly Review, objected that a modern Premier is out of place in a novel. A drawing from the life is of course not permissible, and there are not modern Premiers enough to supply materials for an artistic creation. To conceive one without individual traits would be as difficult as Martinus found it to form an abstract idea of a Lord Mayor without any of the ensigns of his dignity. Miss Edgeworth's Lord Oldborough, excepting two or three slight points of resemblance to Lord Chatham and Lord Grenville, is unlike any premier in *esse* or *posse* ; and we agree with Lord Dudley that, powerfully as her premier is drawn, a great part of our interest is destroyed by constantly reflecting, not only that he did not exist, but that he could not have existed.

The same objection does not hold good against her Chief Justice, for there have been a great many chief justices. We once heard her say that she had Chief Justice Bushe uppermost in her thoughts during the delineation, which has been questioned on the ground that he did not become Chief Justice till after the publication of the book. The difficulty is cleared away by a letter dated January 14, 1822, in which she says: 'I am rejoiced at Mr. Bushe's promotion. Mrs. Bushe sent to me, through Anne Nangle, a most kind message,

alluding to our "Patronage" Chief Justice by *Second Sight*.'

Lord Dudley also hints a doubt whether her English sketches do not suggest that she had taken only an occasional and cursory view of English society. This is not our impression, although she treads more firmly and freely on Irish ground, and the stories of which the scenes are laid in Ireland are most redolent of humour and pathos, more deeply and broadly marked with the stamp of her peculiar genius, than the rest. Lord Jeffrey has reprinted in the corrected edition of his works the opinion which he delivered forty-five years since, that, if she had never written anything but the epistle of Larry Brady, the post-boy, to his brother, which forms the conclusion of the 'Absentee,' 'this one letter must have placed her at the very top of our scale, as an observer of character, and a mistress in the simple pathetic.' Without disputing this opinion, we would undertake to produce half-a-dozen passages of equal merit from the same novel, from 'Ormond,' or from 'Ennui.' Lord Jeffrey had already said that she need not be afraid of being excelled by any of her contemporaries in 'that faithful but flattering representation of the spoken language of persons of wit and politeness—in that light and graceful tone of raillery and argument—and in that gift of sportive but cutting *médisance*, which is sure of success in those circles where success is supposed to be most difficult and desirable.' He appeals to the conversation of Lady Delacour, Lady Dashfort, and Lady Geraldine. If required to specify a complete sketch of an English gentlewoman, he might confidently have pointed to Lady Jane Granville, Mrs. Hungerford, or Mrs. Mortimer.

Speaking of Lord Wellesley in 1825, Moore notes down in his Diary:—'Gave me some very pretty verses of his own to Miss Edgeworth. Showed me some

verses of hers to him, strongly laudatory but very bad.' Moore would have thought any verses bad that had not his own exquisite finish; but verse-making was not her vocation, and poetry was not her forte.

Sheridan, struck by the spirit and point of the dialogue in 'Belinda,' recommended her to try her hand at dramatic composition; and two 'comic dramas,' three acts each—'Love and Law,' and 'The Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock'—are printed in the collected edition of her works. The unity of action wanting in her novels is equally neglected in these dramas: the *dramatis personæ* are mostly Irish of the lower class, and much of the dialogue is pure brogue. The utmost that can be said for these productions is that, if compressed into one-act farces with Irish Johnson and Power to take parts, they might have had a run; and her name must be added to the long list of novelists, headed by Fielding and Le Sage, who have failed, or fallen lamentably short of the expected degree of excellence, in the kindred walk of fiction. The dramatic fame of the author of 'Tom Jones' rests on the mock tragedy of 'Tom Thumb;' and so long as the author of 'Gil Blas' was only known as a playwright, no one saw any incongruity in the joke placed by Piron in the mouth of Punchinello:—'Pourquoi *le fol* de temps en temps ne diroit-il pas de bonnes choses, puisque *le sage* (Le Sage) de temps en temps dit de si mauvaises?'

It is from the apex of the pyramid that men calculate its height, and the altitude of genius must be taken where it has attained its culminating point. Let those who wish to appreciate Miss Edgeworth, to derive the greatest amount of refining and elevating enjoyment from her works, skip the prefaces, short as they are—never think of the moral, excellent as it may be—be not over-critical touching the management of the story, but give themselves up to the charm of the dialogue,

the scene-painting, the delineation and development of character, the happy blending of pathos and humour with the sobriety of truth. Let them do this, and they will cease to wonder at the proud position awarded to her by the dispassionate judgment of her most eminent contemporaries.

## THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING AS A MAN OF LETTERS.

FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW, JULY, 1858.

*Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin: comprising the celebrated Political and Satirical Poems, Parodies, and Jeux-d'esprit of the Right Hon. George Canning, the Earl of Carlisle, Marquis Wellesley, the Right Hon. J. H. Frere, W. Gifford, Esq., the Right Hon. W. Pitt, G. Ellis, Esq., and others. With Explanatory Notes, by CHARLES EDMONDS. Second edition, considerably enlarged. With Six Etchings by the famous caricaturist, JAMES GILLRAY. London: 1854.*

AT the risk of startling many of our readers, we avow our conviction that the Right Hon. George Canning has never been fairly judged or duly appreciated by his countrymen. In Europe and America, he symbolises a policy: in England, he is little better than a name. 'There died the last of the rhetoricians,' was the exclamation of a great northern critic and man of genius. Yet the brilliant effusions, the 'purple patches,' of this so-called rhetorician were underlaid and elevated by more thought and argument than would suffice to set up a host of the 'practical men' who complacently repeat and dwell upon the sneer. His sacrifices in the cause of Catholic emancipation were great and palpable. For that cause, as he truly said, he had surrendered power at a period (1812) when he would readily have bartered ten years of life for two of office. Side by side with Huskisson, of whose views he was the most eloquent exponent, he was (after Pitt) the first eminent Tory who embraced the doctrines of Free Trade. Yet Wellington and Peel, who twice

over resisted the progress of enlightened opinion till they could resist no longer without dismembering the empire or risking a war of classes, are imperishably enshrined in men's minds and memories as the statesmen to whose welcome although tardy abandonment of long-cherished errors the nation stands indebted for religious liberty and cheap bread.

Canning's death, indeed, was in every sense of the word untimely. It took place at the period most unfavourable for his fame; for the intermediate ground he had long occupied between the two great parties, strikingly analogous to that of the amphibious race of Peelites or Liberal-Conservatives in our own time, had inevitably prevented him from enjoying the sympathy or cordial support of either. Nay, it had occasionally exposed him to the jealousy, enmity, or marked distrust of both, and he needed a year or two of power to inaugurate a well-defined policy and form a well-cemented party of his own.

The extent to which party prejudice may be pushed was seldom more strongly exemplified than by the bitterness and pertinacity with which Canning was assailed by Sydney Smith, a congenial spirit in many ways, who, besides making him the subject of the blue-bottle fly comparison,<sup>1</sup> persisted in treating him as a mere joker of jokes, and thus, in the 'Peter Plymley Letters,' summed up his merits and demerits in 1808:

'I can only say I have listened to him long and often, with the greatest attention; I have used every exertion in my power to take a fair measure of him, and it appears to me impossible to hear him upon any arduous topic without perceiving that he is eminently deficient in those solid and

<sup>1</sup> 'Nature descends down to infinite littleness. Mr. Canning has his parasites; and if you take a large buzzing blue-bottle fly, and look at it in a microscope, you may see twenty or thirty little ugly insects crawling about it, which doubtless think their fly to be the bluest, grandest, merriest, most important animal in the universe, and are convinced the world would be at an end if it ceased to buzz.'—*Peter Plymley, Lett. 3, note.*

serious qualities, upon which, and upon which alone, the confidence of a great country can properly repose. He sweats, and labours, and works for sense, and Mr. Ellis always seems to think it is coming, but it does not come: the machine can't draw up what is not to be found in the spring. Providence has made him a light-jesting paragraph-writing man, and that he will remain to his dying day.

'When he is jocular, he is strong; when he is serious, he is like Samson in a wig: any ordinary person is a match for him; a song, an ironical letter, a burlesque ode, an attack in the newspaper upon Nicholl's eyes, a smart speech of twenty minutes full of gross misrepresentations and clever turns, excellent language, a spirited manner, lucky quotation, success in provoking dull men, some half information picked up in Pall Mall in the morning—these are your friend's natural weapons; all these things he can do; here I allow him to be truly great; nay, I will be just, and go still farther—if he would confine himself to these things, and consider the facile and the playful to be the basis of his character, he would, for that species of man, be universally allowed to be a person of a very good understanding: call him a legislator, a reasoner, and the conductor of the affairs of a great nation, and it seems to me as absurd as if a butterfly were to teach bees to make honey. That he is an extraordinary writer of small poetry, and a diner out of the highest order, I do most readily admit. After George Selwyn, and perhaps Tickell, there has been no such man for this half century. The Foreign Secretary is a gentleman, a respectable as well as highly agreeable man in private life, but you may as well feed me with decayed potatoes as console me for the miseries of Ireland by the resources of his sense and his discretion.'

In this passage the clerical wit was unconsciously giving point and currency to the very objections often urged against himself, which always were and will be urged against any wit or man of genius who has the misfortune to startle dulness from its self-complacency. How long did it not take, in his own case, to compel the universal admission that his own exquisite humour

was the finest product of sense and reason—the steel point of the feathered shaft that went swift and unerring to the mark? At the same time, we must make allowance for the asperity which was conventionally permitted to combatants, with tongue or pen, sixty years since. Let it also be remembered that, if Sydney Smith did not spare Canning or his ‘parasites,’ Canning had not spared some of Sydney Smith’s dearest and most esteemed friends; and, in reviving the memory of their swashing blows at the distance of half a century, we feel the same admiration for the wit and fertility of illustration displayed on either side as in reverting to Dryden’s portrait of Achitophel or Pope’s sketch of Sporus. In a retrospective view of the satirical literature which throws a vivid light on political and social history, it matters little to the critic whether any given specimen of irony or invective was aimed by a Whig at a Tory or by a Tory at a Whig.

The world is a jealous world and reluctantly accords the palm in more than one line of superiority or walk of excellence to the same competitor. If Canning had not shone in light literature or ‘small poetry,’ his claim to rank as an orator of the first class would have been conceded long prior to 1808. If his other titles to fame had not subsequently merged and been forgotten in his career as a statesman, we should not now be under the necessity of asserting his independent and distinct right to rank as a man of letters; for, could all his contributions to light literature be collected, he would be admitted to fall short of few political satirists of the more fugitive order, in grace, point, or felicity, and to equal the best of them in fecundity and variety. And this we say with especial reference to Swift; Sir Charles Hanbury Williams; the author of ‘Anticipation’ (Tickell), and the other principal contributors to the ‘Rolliad;’ Peter Pindar, Gifford, Theodore



Hook, and Thomas Moore, who is more indisputably the first in this order of composition than in any other which he touched and adorned.

The importance not long since attached to Latin prosody and the artistical combination of longs and shorts, was hardly exaggerated in the witty remark, that a false quantity in a man was pretty nearly tantamount to a *faux pax* in a woman. The Marquis of Wellesley would appear, from his private correspondence, to have been prouder of his Latin verses than of his Indian policy; and the late Lord Tenterden devoted more of his long vacation to the polishing of his odes in the language and manner of Horace, than to the consolidation of statutes or preparation of judgments. In *their* younger days, which were also Canning's, graceful scholarship was a high social and literary distinction in itself. But, notwithstanding the brilliant example set by Sir George Cornwall Lewis and Mr. Gladstone, the class within which the taste and the capacity for these pursuits are still cultivated has gradually become more select than numerous, and the fame of any modern statesman would be deemed equivocal if it required to be supported or enhanced by a school exercise or a prize poem. We therefore lay no stress on Canning's contributions to the '*Musæ Etonenses*:' but we pause at the '*Microcosm*,' which, though the production of boyhood, contains many passages which would reflect no discredit on the most accomplished mind in its maturity.

The formal title of the collected papers runs thus: '*The Microcosm, a Periodical Work, by Gregory Griffin, of the College of Eton. Inscribed to the Rev. Dr. Davies. In two volumes.*' It consists of a series of papers after the manner of the '*Spectator*,' published weekly (on the Monday), from Nov. 6, 1786, to July 30, 1787, both inclusive. The concluding number contains the will of the editor, Mr. Gregory

Griffin, by which he bequeaths 'the whole of the aforesaid essays, poems, letters, &c. &c. to my much beloved friends, J. Smith, G. Canning, R. Smith, and J. Frere, to be among them divided as shall be hereafter by me appointed, except such legacies as shall be hereafter by me assigned to other my worthy and approved friends.' Amongst the special bequests we find: 'Item. To Mr. George Canning, now of the College of Eton, I do give and bequeath all my papers, essays, &c. &c., signed with B.' The best of these are No. 2, on Swearing; Nos. 11 & 12, Critique on the Heroic Poem of the Knave of Hearts; and No. 30, on Mr. Newbery's Little Books, including a parallel between the character of Tom Thumb and that of Ulysses. Each of these is remarkable for an easy and abundant flow of humour, with (to borrow one of Dr. Johnson's expressions) a bottom of good sense. The subject of Swearing was judiciously chosen; and its importance is heightened with a comic seriousness which would have provoked an approving smile from the Short-faced Gentleman, obviously proposed as a model by the youthful essayist. For example—

'It is an old proverbial expression that "there go two words to a bargain;" now I should not a little admire the ingenuity of that calculator who could define, to any tolerable degree of exactness, how many oaths go to one in these days: for I am confident that there is no business carried on, from the wealthiest bargains of the Exchange to the sixpenny chafferings of a St. Giles's huckster, in which swearing has not a considerable share. And almost every tradesman, "meek and much a liar," will, if his veracity be called in question, coolly consign to Satan some portion of himself, payable on demand, in case his goods be not found answerable to his description of their quality.

'Nay, even the female sex have, to their no small credit, caught the happy contagion; and there is scarce a mercer's wife in the kingdom but has her innocent unmeaning imprecations, her little oaths "softened into nonsense," and,

with squeaking treble, mincing blasphemy into odsbodikins, s'itterkins, and such like, will "swear you like a sucking dove, ay, an it were any nightingale."

It was Swift, we believe, who, happening to be present when a party of accomplished friends were eagerly talking over a game at cards, completed and presented them with an estimate of the proportion which their oaths bore to the rational or intelligible portion of their discourse. Hotspur tells his wife, that she swears like a comfit-maker's wife; and Bob Acre's theory of sentimental swearing must have been freshly remembered in 1787. Yet there is both novelty and ingenuity in Canning's mode of enforcing the same argument; and the recollection of Addison's commentary on 'Chevy Chace' rather enhances the pleasure with which we read his youthful imitator's critical analysis of what he designates the epic poem beginning—

'The queen of hearts  
She made some tarts  
All on a summer's day.'

If self-love did not blind the best of us to our own errors and absurdities, almost every modern editor or commentator who has aspired to emulate the conjectural, and often happy, audacity of Warburton, might fancy that the quiet irony of the following paragraph was levelled at himself:—

'All on a summer's day.

'I cannot leave this line without remarking, that one of the Scribleri, a descendant of the famous Martinus, has expressed his suspicions of the text being corrupted here, and proposes, instead of "All on," reading "Alone," alleging in the favour of this alteration, the effect of solitude in raising the passions. But Hiccius Doctius, a high Dutch commentator, one nevertheless well versed in British literature, in a note of his usual length and learning, has confuted the arguments of Scriblerus. In support of the present reading, he quotes a passage from a poem written about the same

period with our author's, by the celebrated Johannes Pastor (most commonly known as Jack Shepherd), entitled "An Elegiac Epistle to the Turnkey of Newgate," wherein the gentleman declares, that, rather indeed in compliance with an old custom than to gratify any particular wish of his own, he is going

————— All hanged for to be  
Upon that fatal Tyburn tree.

'Now, as nothing throws greater light on an author than the concurrence of a contemporary writer, I am inclined to be of Hiccius's opinion, and to consider the "All" as an elegant expletive, or, as he more aptly phrases it, "*elegans expletivum*."'

There are several other papers, from which, space permitting, we should be glad to quote; and although Canning's are the gems of the publication, it may be cited as a whole to show how rapidly the tone, or what some may call the cant, of the professional essayist or critic may be caught, and how effectively it may be employed by the youngest tyro in the art. It is hardly conceivable that lads of sixteen or seventeen can have thought out for themselves, or fully appreciated, the conclusions they lay down or the canons they apply; yet there is little in their writings by which they could be distinguished from their elders of the same average rate of talent, except what is to their advantage, namely, their superior freshness and vivacity. Just so, it is a remarkable fact, that the best of our comedies, commonly supposed to show the nicest insight into life and manners, have been produced by their respective authors at an age when they must have taken most of their applauded knowledge of society upon trust. We hear much of the intuitive powers of genius, and it certainly does sometimes arrive at surprising results by intellectual processes which seem to dispense with experience. But examination and analysis may possibly suggest a simpler solution, by demonstrating that the knowledge in

question really amounts to little more than cleverness in tracing character and conduct to motives and springs of action which do least credit to mankind. 'What knowledge of life!' exclaim pit and boxes, when Mrs. Candour and Sir Benjamin Backbite are turning their intimate acquaintance into ridicule, or when Mirabell tells Millamant that 'a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain dealing and sincerity.' Yet a diligent perusal of works like 'Rochefoucauld's Maxims,' or 'Grammont's Memoirs,' may supply ample materials for the creation of these fine gentlemen, coquettes, and scandal-mongers, whose conventional and heartless cynicism derives its essential piquancy from the expression and the form. It was not their worldly knowledge, but their wit, to which Congreve and Sheridan were indebted for their early triumphs:

'Broad is the road nor difficult to find,  
Which to the house of Satire leads mankind,  
Narrow and unfrequented are the ways,  
Scarce found out in an age, which lead to Praise.'

We can hardly say of Canning's satire what was said of Sheridan's, that—

'His wit in the combat, as gentle as bright,  
Never carried a heart-stain away on its blade.'

But its severity was redeemed by its buoyancy and geniality, whilst the subjects against which it was principally aimed gave it a healthy tone and a sound foundation. Its happiest effusions will be found in the 'Anti-Jacobin,' set on foot to refute or ridicule the democratic rulers of revolutionary France and their admirers or apologists in England, who, it must be owned, were occasionally hurried into a culpable degree of extravagance and laxity by their enthusiasm. The first number of this celebrated publication appeared on November 7, 1797; the

thirty-sixth and last on July 9, 1798. The collected numbers in prose and verse form two volumes octavo. The poetry was reprinted in a separate volume in 1799; and this volume has since been edited, with explanatory notes, by Mr. Charles Edmonds, who brought acuteness, discrimination, an appreciating spirit, and the most exemplary diligence to the performance of his task. He has taken extraordinary pains to ascertain the authorship, whether joint or several, of the contributions, yet he has evidently not been able to satisfy himself, and he certainly has not satisfied us, on this most important and interesting point. The chief difficulty arises from the discrepancy between the oral and traditional, the internal and the external, evidence. Opposite to the title of each contribution in the table of contents, Mr. Edmonds has placed the name or names of the supposed writer or writers. The authorities on which he relies are four :—‘Canning’s own copy of the poetry; Lord Burghersh’s copy; Wright the publisher’s copy; information of W. Upcott, amanuensis.’ The following curious account, printed between inverted commas, is subjoined to the table of contents :—

‘Wright, the publisher of the “Anti-Jacobin,” lived at 169 Piccadilly, and his shop was the general morning resort of the friends of the ministry, as Debrett’s was of the oppositionists. About the time when the “Anti-Jacobin” was contemplated, Owen, who had been the publisher of Burke’s pamphlets, failed. The editors of the “Anti-Jacobin” took his house, paying the rent, taxes, &c., and gave it up to Wright, reserving to themselves the first floor, to which a communication was opened through Wright’s house. Being thus enabled to pass to their own rooms through Wright’s shop, where their frequent visits did not excite any remarks, they contrived to escape particular observation.

‘Their meetings were most regular on Sundays, but they not unfrequently met on other days of the week, and in their rooms were chiefly written the poetical portions of the work. What was written was generally left open upon the

table, and, as others of the party dropped in, hints or suggestions were made; sometimes whole passages were contributed by some of the parties present, and afterwards altered by others, so that it is almost impossible to ascertain the names of the authors. . . .

' GIFFORD was the working editor, and wrote most of the refutations and corrections of the "Lies," "Mistakes," and "Misrepresentations." The papers on finance were chiefly by PITT: the first column was frequently for what he might send; but his contributions were uncertain, and generally very late, so that the space reserved for him was sometimes filled up by other matter. He only once met the editors at Wright's. UPCOTT, who was at the time assistant in Wright's shop, was employed as amanuensis, to copy out for the printer the various contributions, that the authors' handwriting might not be detected.'

The editor, speaking in his own proper person, continues:—

' For the above interesting particulars, as well as for most of the names of the authors, the public are indebted to the researches of E. Hawkins, Esq., of the British Museum.

' It is probable, notwithstanding Lord Burghersh's assertion, that Mr. Hammond did not write one line, certainly not of verse. With regard to Mr. Wright's appropriation of particular passages to different authors, it is obviously mere conjecture. Both Canning and Gifford professed *not* to be able to make such distribution; but the former's share of "New Morality" was so very much the largest as to entitle him to be considered its author.'

We learn from Mr. Edmonds that almost all his authorities practically resolve themselves into one, the late Mr. Upcott, and that he never saw either of the alleged copies on which his informant relied. As regards the principal one, Canning's own, after the fullest inquiries amongst his surviving relatives and friends, we cannot discover a trace of its existence at any period. Lord Burghersh (the late Earl of Westmoreland) was under fourteen years of age during

the publication of the 'Anti-Jacobin;' and we very much doubt whether either the publisher or the amanuensis (be he who he may) was admitted to the complete confidence of the contributors, or whether either the prose or poetry was composed as stated. In a letter to the late Madame de Girardin, *à propos* of her play, 'L'École des Journalistes,' Jules Janin happily exposes the assumption that good leading articles ever were, or ever could be, produced over punch and broiled bones, amidst intoxication and revelry. Equally untenable is the belief that poetical pieces, like the best of the 'Anti-Jacobin,' were written in the common rooms of the confraternity, open to constant intrusion, and left upon the table to be corrected or completed by the first comer. The unity of design discernible in each, the glowing harmony of the thoughts and images, and the exquisite finish of the versification, tell of silent and solitary hours spent in brooding over, maturing, and polishing a cherished conception; and young authors, still unknown to fame, are least of all likely to sink their individuality in this fashion. We suspect that their main object in going to Wright's was to correct their proofs and see one another's articles in the more finished state. Their meetings, if for these purposes, would be most regular on Sundays, because the paper appeared every Monday morning. The extent to which they aided one another may be collected from a well-authenticated anecdote. When Frere had completed the first part of the 'Loves of the Triangles,' he exultingly read over the following lines to Canning, and defied him to improve upon them:—

'Lo; where the chimney's sooty tube ascends,  
The fair TROCHAIKS from the corner bends!  
Her coal-black eyes upturned, incessant mark  
The eddying smoke, quick flame, and volant spark;  
Mark with quick ken, where flashing in between,  
Her much-loved *Smoke-Jack* glimmers thro' the scene;



Mark, how his various parts together tend,  
 Point to one purpose,—in one object end ;  
 The spiral grooves in smooth meanders flow,  
 Drags the long chain, the polished axles glow,  
 While slowly circumsolves the piece of beef below.'

Canning took the pen and added—

'The conscious fire with bickering radiance burns,  
 Eyes the rich joint, and roasts it as it turns.'

These two lines are now blended with the original text, and constitute, we are informed on the best authority, the only flaw in Frere's title to the sole authorship of the First Part. The Second and Third Parts were by Canning.

By the kindness of Lord Hatherton, we have now before us a bound volume containing all the numbers of 'the Anti-Jacobin' as they originally appeared: eight pages quarto, with double columns, price sixpence. On the fly-leaf is inscribed: 'This copy belonged to the Marquess Wellesley, and was purchased at the sale of his library after his death, January, 1842. H.' On the cover is pasted an engraved label of the arms and name of a former proprietor, Charles William Flint, with the pencilled addition of 'Confidential Amanuensis.' In this copy Canning's name is subscribed to (amongst others) the following pieces, which are also assigned to him (along with a large share in the most popular of the rest) by the most trustworthy rumours and traditions: 'Inscription for the Door of the Cell in Newgate where Mrs. Brownrigg, the Prenticide, was confined previous to her execution;' 'The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder:' the lines addressed 'To the Author of the Epistle to the Editors of the Anti-Jacobin;' 'The Progress of Man' (all three parts); and 'New Morality.'

<sup>1</sup> On the subject of the respective authorship of the contributions to the *Anti-jacobin*, see the 'Works of John Hookham Frere, in verse and prose, with Prefatory Memoir: Edited by his Nephews, H. and Sir Bartle Frere,' and the *Edinburgh Review* for April, 1872, p. 476.

With the single exception of 'The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder,' no piece in the collection is more freshly remembered than the 'Inscription for the Cell of Mrs. Brownrigg,' who

'Whipp'd two female prentices to death,  
And hid them in the coal-hole.'

The answer to 'The Author of the Epistle to the Editors of the Anti-Jacobin' is less known, and it derives a fresh interest from the fact, recently made public, that the Epistle (which appeared in the 'Morning Chronicle' of January 17, 1798) was the composition of William Lord Melbourne. The beginning shows that the veil of incognito had been already penetrated.

'Whoe'er ye are, all hail!—whether the skill  
Of youthful CANNING guides the ranc'rous quill;  
With powers mechanic far above his age,  
Adapts the paragraph and fills the page;  
Measures the column, mends whate'er's amiss,  
Rejects THAT letter, and accepts of THIS;  
Or HAMMOND, leaving his official toil,  
O'er this great work consume the midnight oil—  
Bills, passports, letters, for the Muses quit,  
And change dull business for amusing wit.'

After referring to 'the poetic sage, who sung of Gallia in a headlong rage,' the epistle proceeds:—

'I swear by all the youths that MALMESBURY chose,<sup>1</sup>  
By ELLIS' sapient prominence of nose  
By MORPETH's gait, important, proud, and big—  
*By Leveson Gower's crop-imitating wig,*  
That, could the pow'rs which in those numbers shine,  
Could that warm spirit animate my line,  
Your glorious deeds which humbly I rehearse—  
Your deeds should live immortal as my verse;  
And, while they wonder'd whence I caught my flame,  
Your sons should blush to read their father's shame.'

Happily the eminent and accomplished sons of these fathers will smile, rather than blush, at this allusion to

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that these eminent persons were chosen by Lord Malmesbury to accompany him on his mission to Lille and were associated with him in the abortive negotiations for peace.

their sires, and smile the more when they remember from which side the attack proceeded. It is clear from the answer, that, whilst the band were not a little ruffled, they had not the remotest suspicion that their assailant was a youth in his nineteenth year. Amongst other prefatory remarks they say :—

‘ We assure the author of the epistle, that the answer which we have here the honour to address to him, contains our genuine and undisguised sentiments upon the merits of the poem.

‘ Our conjectures respecting the authors and abettors of this performance may possibly be as vague and unfounded as theirs are with regard to the EDITORS of the *Anti-Jacobin*. We are sorry that we cannot satisfy their curiosity upon this subject—but we have little anxiety for the gratification of our own.

‘ It is only necessary to add, what is most conscientiously the truth, that this production, such as it is, is *by far the best* of all the attacks that the combined wits of the cause have been able to muster against the *Anti-Jacobin*.’

The answer opens thus :—

‘ BARD of the borrow'd lyre ! to whom belong  
The shreds and remnants of each hackney'd song ;  
Whose verse thy friends in vain for wit explore,  
And count but *one good line* in eighty-four !  
Whoe'er thou art, all hail ! Thy bitter smile  
Gilds our dull page, and cheers our humble toil !’

The ‘ one good line ’ was ‘ by Leveson Gower’s crop-imitating wig,’ but the Epistle contains many equally good and some better. The speculations as to its authorship afforded no slight amusement to the writer and his friends.

The ‘ Progress of Man ’ is a parody on ‘ The Progress of Civil Society,’ a didactic poem, in six books, by Mr. Payne Knight, published in 1796. It was strongly imbued with the new philosophy, and awarded a decided superiority to the unsophisticated ways of man in his savage or natural state over the customs and

manners (tacitly assumed to be unnatural) of civilisation. Like most of the productions mentioned in the 'Dunciad,' it is now only redeemed from utter oblivion by the poignant ridicule which it provoked. Mr. Knight's poetical description of the universality of the sexual passion, which he described as 'warming the whale on Zembla's frozen shore,' is rather imitated and amplified, than exaggerated, in the lines—

'How Lybian tigers' chawdrons love assails,  
And warms, midst seas of ice, the melting whales ;—  
Cools the crimp'd cod, fierce pangs to perch imparts,  
Shrinks shrivell'd shrimps, but opens oysters' hearts ;  
Then say, how all these things together tend  
To one great truth, prime object, and good end ?' !

Equally good are the lines in which the placidity of the animal and vegetable races is contrasted (as it actually was by Mr. Payne Knight) with the restlessness of mankind :—

'First—to each living thing, whate'er its kind,  
Some lot, some part, some station is assign'd.  
The feather'd race with pinions skim the air—  
Not so the mackerel, and still less the bear ;  
*This* roams the wood, carniv'rous for his prey !  
*That* with soft roe pursues his watery way :  
*This* slain by hunters, yields his shaggy hide ;  
*That*, caught by fishers, is on Sundays cried.—  
But each contented with his humble sphere,  
Moves unambitious through the circling year.'

Part the second is short, and contains little worth quoting, except the lines in which the gradual growth of the carnivorous tendency in the human species is traced and accounted for. The savage sees a tiger devouring a leveret or a pig, and is forthwith smitten with the desire to do likewise. He first, guided by instinct, constructs a bow and arrows :

'Then forth he fares. Around in careless play,  
Kids, pigs, and lambkins unsuspecting stray ;  
With grim delight he views the sportive band,  
Intent on blood, and lifts his murderous hand.  
Twangs the bent bow—resounds the fateful dart,  
Swift-winged, and trembles in a porker's heart.'

The concluding part is devoted to Marriage, which Mr. Payne Knight has treated in the manner of Eloisa's famous epistle to Abelard. After an invocation to the South Sea Islands, and a glowing sketch of the happy absence of form with which connubial rites are there celebrated, the parody proceeds :

' Learn hence, each nymph, whose free aspiring mind  
Europe's cold laws, and colder customs bind—  
Oh ! learn, what Nature's genial laws decree—  
What Otaheite is, let Britain be ! '

Then comes the inimitable portrait of Adelaide in  
' The Stranger : '

' With look sedate and staid beyond her years,  
In matron weeds a Housekeeper appears.  
The jingling keys her comely girdle deck—  
Her 'kerchief coloured, and her apron *check*.  
Can that be Adelaide, that 'soul of whim,'  
Reform'd in practice, and in manner prim ?  
—On household cares intent, with many a sigh  
She turns the pancake, and she moulds the pie ;  
Melts into sauces rich the savoury ham ;  
From the crush'd berry strains the lucid jam ;  
Bids brandied cherries, by infusion slow,  
Imbibe new flavour, and their own forego,  
Sole cordial of her heart, sole solace of her woe !  
While still, responsive to each mournful moan,  
The saucepan simmers in a softer tone.'

In taking up Frere's conception of 'The Loves of the Triangles,' Canning might have been encouraged by the example of Addison, who borrowed or wrested Sir Roger de Coverley from Steele. The second part of this poem is principally remarkable for the airy grace and fineness of touch with which the abstract is invested with the qualities of the concrete and sentient. The object of affection to the rival curves, who display their feelings in the lines we are about to quote, is 'The Phœnician Cone,' thus mentioned in a note :—

' *Phœnician Cone*.—It was under this shape that Venus was worshipped in Phœnicia. Mr. HIGGINS thinks it was the *Venus Urania*, or Celestial Venus ; in allusion to which,

the Phœnician grocers first introduced the practice of preserving sugar-loaves in blue or sky-coloured paper—he also believes that the *conical* form of the original grenadier's cap was typical of the loves of Mars and Venus.'

This is the shape, being, or entity, whose favours are emulously sought by Parabola, Hyperbola, and Ellipsis, like the three goddesses contending for the apple, and with equal freedom from prudery :—

'And first, the fair PARABOLA behold,  
Her timid arms, with virgin blush, unfold !  
Though, on one *focus* fixed, her eyes betray  
A heart that glows with love's resistless sway ;  
Though, climbing oft, she strives with bolder grace  
Round his tall neck to clasp her fond embrace,  
Still ere she reach it, from his polished side  
Her trembling hands in devious *Tangents* glide.  
'Not thus HYPERBOLA : with subtlest art  
The blue-eyed wanton plays her changeful part ;  
Quick as her *conjugated axes* move  
Through every posture of luxurious love,  
Her sportive limbs with easiest grace expand ;  
Her charms unveil'd provoke the lover's hand :  
Unveil'd, except in many a filmy ray,  
Where light *Asymptotes* o'er her bosom play,  
Nor touch her glowing skin, nor intercept the day.  
'Yet why, ELLIPSIS, at thy fate repine ?  
More lasting bliss, securer joys are thine.  
Though to each fair his treacherous wish may stray,  
Though each, in turn, may seize a transient sway,  
'Tis thine with mild coercion to restrain,  
Twine round his struggling heart, and bind with endless chain.'

Thus, continues the poem, three directors woo the young republic's virgin charms : thus three sister witches hailed Macbeth : thus three Fates weave the woof : thus three Graces attire Venus : thus three daughters form the happiness or misery of Leah : and, lastly,

'So down thy hill, romantic Ashbourn glides  
The Derby dilly, carrying *Three INSIDES*.'

When the late Mr. O'Connell applied these celebrated lines to the late Earl of Derby, he made the dilly carry six insides, which had the double advantage of de-

scribing the vehicle more accurately and of giving additional point to the joke.

The 'Rolliad,' it will be remembered, consists of extracts from a supposed poem, interspersed with notes and commentaries. This plan is imitated in the third and last part of 'The Loves of the Triangles,' which does not profess to be more than the concluding lines of a canto, describing 'The Loves of the Giant Isosceles, and the picture of the Asses-Bridge and its several illustrations.' London Bridge is one of these illustrations, and the Bridge of Lodi another.

'So, towering Alp! from thy majestic ridge \*  
Young Freedom gazed on Lodi's blood-stained Bridge ;  
Saw in thick throngs, conflicting armies rush,  
Ranks close on ranks, and squadrons squadrons crush ;  
Burst in bright radiance through the battle's storm,  
Waved her broad hands, displayed her awful form ;  
Bade at her feet regenerate nations bow,  
And twined the wreath round BUONAPARTE'S brow.'

\* *Alp*, or *Alps*.—A ridge of mountains which separate the North of Italy from the South of Germany. They are evidently primeval and volcanic, consisting of granite, toad-stone, and basalt, and several other substances, containing animal and vegetable recrements, and affording numberless undoubted proofs of the infinite antiquity of the earth, and of the consequent falsehood of the Mosaic chronology.'

It will be collected from this note that the momentous question involved in the case of Moses against Murchison, was raised long before the ingenious founder of the Silurian system began to disturb or affright the more narrow-minded portion of the clerical body. We fancy, moreover, that in young Freedom gazing from the majestic ridge, we discern the outline of one of the finest apostrophes in 'Childe Harold:—

'Lo, where the Giant on the mountain stands.'

But, to give everybody his due, it should be added that two lines in the foregoing extract are suggested by—

'As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm.'

The same, the finest, passage of 'The Deserted Village' appears to have haunted Canning from his youth upwards. The concluding lines of his juvenile poem entitled 'The Slavery of Greece' are a weak paraphrase of it:

'So some tall rock, whose bare broad bosom high  
Tow'rs from the earth, and braves th' inclement sky;  
On whose vast top the black'ning deluge pours,  
At whose wide base the thund'ring ocean roars,  
In conscious pride its huge gigantic form  
Surveys imperious and defies the storm.'

This is one of the strongest instances of unconscious plagiarism—for it must have been unconscious—that we remember.

In the parody, 'the imps of murder' are busily employed in building ships for the invasion of England, whilst to another troop is assigned an equally congenial and appropriate duty:—

'Ye Sylphs of DEATH! on demon pinions flit  
Where the tall Guillotine is raised for PRRT:  
To the poised plank tie fast the monster's back,  
Close the nice slider, ope the expectant sack;  
Then twitch, with fairy hands, the frolic pin—  
Down falls the impatient axe with deafening din;  
The liberated head rolls off below,  
And simpering Freedom hails the happy blow!'

Lord Jeffrey, as we are reminded by Mr. Edmonds, terms 'The Loves of the Triangles' the perfection of parody. 'All the peculiarities,' he remarks, 'of the original poet are here brought together and crowded into a little space, where they can be compared and estimated with ease.'

Darwin thus addresses the gnomes:—

'Gnomes, as you now dissect, with hammers fine,  
The granite rock, the noduled flint calcine;  
Grind with strong arm the circling Chertz betwixt,  
Your pure K—o—lins and Pe—tunt—ses mixt.'

The authors have certainly placed in broad relief the essential error of Dr. Darwin's poetic theory, his mania for personification, his wearisome and laughter-moving



trick of investing with the qualities of sentient beings the entire vegetable creation, as well as every abstract notion and almost every noun-substantive that crossed his mind. The tendency of the political and social doctrines with which he seasoned his verse, is also justly and pointedly exposed. But, considered merely as a parody, Canning's part is open to the objection that it occasionally strikes too high a key, and awakens finer and more elevated associations than were, or could have been, evoked by the original. The cherub crew who 'their mimic task pursue,' in 'The Loves of the Triangles,' bear a much closer resemblance to the sylphs who kept watch and ward around Belinda's toilette table, than to the gnomes at work on 'noduled flint.' They recall the 'Rape of the Lock,' rather than the 'Loves of the Plants;' and we cannot accept as a perfect caricature of Dr. Darwin a production which, in so short a space, anticipates Byron, paraphrases Goldsmith, and employs, without tarnishing, the delicate machinery of Pope.

'New Morality' is commonly regarded as the masterpiece of the 'Anti-Jacobin;' and, with the exception of a few lines, the whole of it is by Canning. It appeared in the last number, and he is said to have concentrated all his energies for a parting blow. The reader who comes fresh from Dryden or Pope, or even Churchill, will be disappointed on finding far less variety of images, sparkling antithesis, or condensed brilliancy of expression. The author exhibits abundant humour and eloquence, but comparatively little wit; i.e. if there be any truth in Sydney Smith's doctrine 'that the feeling of wit is occasioned by those relations of ideas which excite surprise, and surprise *alone*.' We are commonly prepared for what is coming, and our admiration is excited rather by the justness of the observations, the elevation of the thoughts, and the vigour of the style, than by a startling succession of

flashes of fancy. If, as we believe, the same might be said of Juvenal, and the best of his English imitators, Johnson, we leave ample scope for praise; and 'New Morality' contains passages which have been preserved to our time and bid fair to reach posterity. How often are the lines on Candour quoted in entire ignorance or forgetfulness of their author:

"Much may be said on both sides." Hark I hear  
 A well-known voice that murmurs in my ear,—  
 The voice of CANDOUR.—Hail! most solemn sage,  
 Thou drivelling virtue of this moral age,  
 CANDOUR, which softens party's headlong rage,  
 CANDOUR,—which spares its foes! nor e'er descends  
 With bigot zeal to combat for its friends.  
 CANDOUR,—which loves in see-saw strain to tell  
 Of *acting foolishly*, but *meaning well*:  
 Too nice to praise by wholesale, or to blame,  
 Convinced that *all men's motives* are the same;  
 And finds, with keen discriminating sight,  
 BLACK's not so black; nor WHITE so very white.  
 "FOX, to be sure, was vehement and wrong:  
 But then PITT's words, you'll own, were rather strong.  
 Both must be blamed, both pardon'd; 'twas just so  
 With FOX and PITT full forty years ago!  
 So WALPOLE, PULTENEY;—factions in all times  
 Have had their follies, ministers their crimes."  
 'Give me th' avow'd, th' erect, the manly foe,  
 Bold I can meet—perhaps may turn his blow;  
 But of all plagues, good Heav'n, thy wrath can send,  
 Save, save, oh! save me from the *Candid Friend*!'

After reading these lines, we readily make up our minds, at the author's bidding, to distrust the next person who attempts to mitigate our censure or our praise; although we may be really giving full indulgence to a prejudice, which a very small allowance of Christian charity, self-examination, or genuine unsophisticated candour, would correct. The dangerous tendency of the doctrine is immediately afterwards shown by its application:—

'I love the bold uncompromising mind,  
 Whose principles are fix'd, whose views defined:  
 Who owns, when Traitors feel th' avenging rod,  
 Just retribution, and the hand of God;

Who hears the groans through Olmütz' roofs that ring,  
Of him who mock'd, misled, betray'd his king—  
Hears unappall'd, though Faction's zealots preach,  
Unmoved, unsoftened by FITZPATRICK'S Speech.'

So, to show defiance of canting candour, we are required to hear unmoved the groans of a pure-minded and well-intentioned, however mistaken, patriot in a foreign prison. According to M. Guizot (in his *Memoirs*), Charles X. observed after his accession to the throne, that the only two persons who had not changed since 1789 were Lafayette and himself. Early in his revolutionary career, the general was nicknamed the Grandison Cromwell. Brave, honest, consistent, but vain, weak and credulous, he was little better than a puppet in the hands of the principal actors of the scenes in which he played so conspicuous a part. We can, therefore, understand the refusal of sympathy to such a man when he is punished by exile for having been an instrument in the hands of the enemies of social order and rational freedom. But to exult in his imprisonment and separation from his wife, is to prove how easily party prejudice may be confounded with 'innate sense of right,' and how necessary it is for the best of us to probe our likings and dislikings to their source.

Ten lines on the British oak have been traditionally attributed to Pitt:—

'So thine own oak, by some fair streamlet's side  
Waves its broad arms, and spreads its leafy pride,  
Tow'rs from the earth, and rearing to the skies  
Its conscious strength, the tempest's wrath defies :  
Its ample branches shield the fowls of air,  
To its cool shade the panting herds repair.  
The treacherous current works its noiseless way,  
The fibres loosen, and the roots decay ;  
Prostrate the beauteous ruin lies ; and all  
That shared its shelter, perish in its fall.'

It seems to have been a fixed maxim with the controversialists of those days to consider all who were

not with them as against them, and this satire denounces with indiscriminating severity all who, at home or abroad, on the political or literary arena, had manifested the slightest leaning towards the new philosophy, or were even in habits of friendly intercourse with its votaries. It is also rather startling, contrasted with modern amenities, to find 'Neckar's fair daughter,' who said she would give all her fame for the power of fascinating, introduced as—

'Stäel, the Epicene !  
Bright o'er whose flaming cheek and purple nose  
The bloom of young desire unceasing glows.'

Nor, much as Talleyrand's reputation has declined of late years and low as his political honesty stood at all times, would anything be now thought to justify such a diatribe as:—

'Where at the blood-stain'd board expert he plies,  
The lame artificer of fraud and lies ;  
He with the mitred head and cloven heel ;—  
Doom'd the coarse edge of REWBELL's jests to feel ;  
To stand the playful buffet, and to hear  
The frequent inkstand whizzing past his ear ;  
While all the five Directors laugh to see  
"The limping priest so deft at his new ministry."'

According to a current story, Rewbell, exasperated by Talleyrand's opposition at council, flung an inkstand at his head, exclaiming: '*Vil émigré, tu n'as pas le sens plus droit que le pied.*' In the centre of the troop who are introduced singing the praises of Lepaux, were inconsiderately placed a group of writers, who, with equal disregard of their respective peculiarities and opinions, were subsequently lumped together as the Lake School:—

'And ye five other wandering bards, that move  
In sweet accord of harmony and love,  
COLERIDGE and SOUTHEY, LLOYD, and LAMB & Co.,  
Tune all your mystic harps to praise LEPAUX !'

Talfourd, in his *Life of Charles Lamb*, justly complains of Elia's being accused of new theories in morality

which he detested, or represented as offering homage to 'a French charlatan of whose existence he had never heard.' In allusion to the same passage, Southey writes to the late Mr. Charles Wynn, Aug. 15, 1798 :—

'I know not what poor Lamb has done to be croaking there. What I think the worst part of the "Anti-Jacobin" abuse is the lumping together men of such opposite principles : this was stupid. We should have all been welcoming the Director, not the Theophilanthrope. The conductors of the "Anti-Jacobin" will have much to answer for in thus inflaming the animosities of this country. They are labouring to produce the deadly hatred of Irish faction ; perhaps to produce the same end.'

The drama of 'The Rovers,' or 'Double Arrangement,' was written to ridicule the German drama, then hardly known in this country, except through the medium of bad translations of some of the least meritorious of Schiller's, Goethe's, and Kotzebue's productions. The parody is now principally remembered by Rogero's song, of which, Mr. Edmonds states, the first five stanzas were by Mr. Canning. 'Having been accidentally seen, previously to its publication, by Mr. Pitt, he was so amused with it that he took a pen and composed the last stanza on the spot.' To save our readers the trouble of reference, we quote it entire :—

## I.

' Whene'er with haggard eyes I view  
This dungeon that I'm rotting in,  
I think of those companions true  
Who studied with me at the U—  
—niversity of Gottingen—  
—niversity of Gottingen.

## II.

' Sweet kerchief, check'd with heavenly blue,  
Which once my love sat knotting in !  
Alas ! Matilda *then* was true !  
At least I thought so at the U—  
—niversity of Gottingen—  
—niversity of Gottingen.

## III.

'Barbs ! Barbs ! alas ! how swift you flew  
 Her neat post-waggon trotting in !  
 Ye bore Matilda from my view ;  
 Forlorn I languished at the U—  
     —niversity of Gottingen—  
     —niversity of Gottingen.

## IV.

'This faded form ! this pallid hue !  
 This blood my veins is clotting in,  
 My years are many—they were few  
 When first I entered at the U—  
     —niversity of Gottingen—  
     —niversity of Gottingen.

## V.

'There first for thee my passion grew,  
 Sweet ! sweet Matilda Pottingen !  
 Thou wast the daughter of my tu—  
     —tor, law professor at the U—  
     —niversity of Gottingen—  
     —niversity of Gottingen.

## VI.

'Sun, moon, and thou vain world, adieu,  
 That kings and priests are plotting in :  
 Here doom'd to starve on water gru—  
     —el, never shall I see the U—  
     —niversity of Gottingen—  
     —niversity of Gottingen.'

Canning's reputed share in 'The Rovers' excited the unreasoning indignation, and provoked the exaggerated censure, of a man who has obtained a world-wide reputation by his historical researches, most especially by his skill in separating the true from the fabulous, and in filling up chasms in national annals by a process near akin to that by which Cuvier inferred the entire form and structure of an extinct species from a bone. The following passage is taken from Niebuhr's 'History of the Period of the Revolution,' (published from his Lectures, in two volumes, in 1845):—

'Canning was at that time (1807) at the head of foreign affairs in England. History will not form the same judg-

ment of him as that formed by contemporaries. He had great talents, but was not a great statesman ; he was one of those persons who distinguish themselves as the squires of political heroes. He was highly accomplished in the two classical languages, but without being a learned scholar. He was especially conversant with Greek writers. He had likewise poetical talent, but only for satire. At first he had joined the leaders of opposition against Pitt's ministry ; Lord Grey, who perceived his ambition, advised him, half in joke, to join the ministers, as he would make his fortune. He did so, and was employed to write articles for the newspapers, and satirical verses, which were often directed against his former benefactors.

‘ Through the influence of the ministers he came into Parliament. So long as the great eloquence of former times lasted, and the great men were alive, his talent was admired ; but older persons had no great pleasure in his petulant epigrammatic eloquence and his jokes, which were often in bad taste. He joined the Society of the Anti-Jacobins, which defended everything connected with existing institutions. This society published a journal, in which the most honoured names of foreign countries were attacked in the most scandalous manner. German literature was at that time little known in England, and it was associated there with the ideas of Jacobinism and revolution. Canning then published in the “ Anti-Jacobin ” the most shameful pasquinade which was ever written against Germany, under the title of “ Matilda Pottingen.” Göttingen is described in it as the sink of all infamy ; professors and students as a gang of miscreants : licentiousness, incest, and atheism as the character of the German people. Such was Canning’s beginning : he was at all events useful ; a sort of political Cossack.’ (*Geschichte des Zeitalters der Revolution*, vol. ii. p. 242.)

‘ Here am I,’ exclaimed Raleigh, after vainly trying to get at the rights of a squabble in the courtyard of the Tower, ‘ employed in writing a true history of the world, when I cannot ascertain the truth of what happens under my own window.’ Here is the great restorer of Roman history—who, by the way, prided himself on his knowledge of England—hurried into

the strangest misconception of contemporary events and personages, and giving vent to a series of depreciatory mis-statements, without pausing to verify the assumed groundwork of his patriotic wrath. His description of 'the most shameful pasquinade,' and his ignorance of the very title, prove that he had never seen it. If he had, he would also have known that the scene is laid at Weimar, not at Göttingen; and that the satire is almost exclusively directed against a portion of the dramatic literature of his country, which all rational admirers must admit to be indefensible. The scene in 'The Rovers,' in which the rival heroines, meeting for the first time at an inn, swear eternal friendship and embrace, is positively a feeble reflection of a scene in Goethe's 'Stella;' and no anachronism can exceed that in Schiller's 'Cabal and Liebe,' when Lady Milford, after declaring herself the daughter of the Duke of Norfolk who rebelled against Queen Elizabeth, is horrified on finding that the jewels sent her by the Grand Duke have been purchased by the sale of 7000 of his subjects to be employed in the American war.<sup>1</sup>

Amongst the prose contributions to the 'Anti-Jacobin,' there is one in which, independently of direct evidence, the peculiar humour of Canning is discernible,—the pretended report of the meeting of the

<sup>1</sup> It is surprising that the satirist's attention was not attracted to the scene in 'Stella,' in which one of the heroines describes the rapid growth of her passion to its object: 'I know not if you observed that you had enchained my interest from the first moment of our first meeting. I at least soon became aware that your eyes sought mine. Ah, Fernando, then my uncle brought the music, you took your violin, and, as you played, my eyes rested upon you free from care. I studied every feature of your face; and, during an unexpected pause, you fixed your eyes upon—upon me! They met mine! How I blushed, how I looked away! You observed it, Fernando; for from that moment I felt that you looked oftener over your music-book, often played out of tune, to the disturbance of my uncle. Every false note, Fernando, went to my heart. It was the sweetest confusion I ever felt in my life.'



Friends of Freedom at the Crown and Anchor Tavern.<sup>1</sup> The plan was evidently suggested by Tickell's 'Anticipation,' in which the debate on the Address at the opening of the Session was reported beforehand with such surprising foresight, that some of the speakers, who were thus forestalled, declined to deliver their meditated orations.

At the meeting of the Friends of Freedom, Erskine, whose habitual egotism could hardly be caricatured, is made to perorate as follows :—

' MR. ERSKINE concluded by recapitulating, in a strain of agonizing and impressive eloquence, the several more prominent heads of his speech :—He had been a soldier and a sailor, and had a son at Winchester School—he had been called by special retainers, during the summer, into many different and distant parts of the country—travelling chiefly in post-chaises—he felt himself called upon to declare that his poor faculties were at the service of his country—of the free and enlightened part of it at least—he stood here as a man—he stood in the eye, indeed in the hand, of God—to whom (in the presence of the company and waiters), he solemnly appealed—he was of noble, perhaps Royal Blood—he had a house at Hampstead—was convinced of the necessity of a thorough and radical Reform—his pamphlet had gone through thirty editions, skipping alternately the odd and even numbers—he loved the Constitution, to which he would cling and grapple—and he was clothed with the infirmities of man's nature—he would apply to the present French rulers (particularly BARRAS and REUBEL) the words of the poet :—

" Be to their faults a little blind ;  
Be to their virtues very kind,  
Let all their ways be unconfined,  
And clap the padlock on their mind !"

And for these reasons, thanking the gentlemen who had done him the honour to drink his health, he should propose

<sup>1</sup> The whole of this *jeu d'esprit* has been claimed for Frere, but on unsatisfactory evidence. It is much more in Canning's way as a student of oratory, which Frere was not.

*“MERLIN, the late Minister of Justice, and Trial by Jury !”*

A long speech is given to Mackintosh, who, under the name of Macfungus, after a fervid sketch of the Temple of Freedom which he proposes to construct on the ruins of ancient establishments, proceeds with kindling animation :—

“There our infants shall be taught to lisp in tender accents the Revolutionary Hymn—there with wreaths of myrtle, and oak, and poplar, and vine, and olive, and cypress, and ivy ; with violets and roses, and daffodils and dandelions in our hands, we will swear respect to childhood, and manhood, and old age, and virginity, and womanhood, and widowhood ; but, above all, to the Supreme Being. \* \*

“These prospects, fellow-citizens, may possibly be deferred. The Machiavelism of Governments may for the time prevail, and this unnatural and execrable contest may yet be prolonged ; but the hour is not far distant ; persecution will only serve to accelerate it, and the blood of patriotism streaming from the severing axe will call down vengeance on our oppressor in a voice of thunder. I expect the contest, and I am prepared for it. I hope I shall never shrink, nor swerve, nor start aside, wherever duty and inclination may place me. My services, my life itself, are at your disposal—whether to act or to suffer, I am yours—with HAMPDEN in the Field, or with SIDNEY on the Scaffold. My example may be more useful to you than my talents : and this head may perhaps serve your cause more effectually, if placed on a pole upon Temple Bar, than if it was occupied in organising your committees, in preparing your revolutionary explosions, and conducting your correspondence.”

The wit and fun of these imitations are undeniable ; and their injustice is equally so. Erskine, with all his egotism, was and remains the greatest of English advocates. He stemmed and turned the tide which threatened to sweep away the most valued of our free institutions in 1794 ; and (we say with Lord Brougham) ‘before such a precious service as this, well may the

lustre of statesmen and orators grow pale.' Mackintosh was pre-eminently distinguished by the comprehensiveness and moderation of his views; nor could any man be less disposed by temper, habits, or pursuits towards revolutionary courses. His Lectures on 'The Law of Nature and Nations' were especially directed against the new morality in general, and Godwin's 'Political Justice' in particular.

At a long subsequent period (1807), Canning, when attacked in Parliament for his share in the 'Anti-Jacobin,' declared that 'he felt no shame for its character or principles, nor any other sorrow for the share he had had in it, than that which the imperfection of his pieces was calculated to inspire.' Still, it is one of the inevitable inconveniences of a connection with the press, that the best known writers should be made answerable for the errors of their associates; and the license of the 'Anti-Jacobin' gave serious and well-founded offence to many who shared its opinions and wished well to its professed object. In Wilberforce's 'Diary' for May 18, 1799, we find, 'Pitt, Canning, and Pepper Arden came in late to dinner. I attacked Canning on indecency of "Anti-Jacobin." Coleridge, in his "Biographia Literaria," complains bitterly of the calumnious accounts given by the "Anti-Jacobin" of his early life, and asks with reason, "Is it surprising that many good men remained longer than perhaps they otherwise would have done, adverse to a party which encouraged and openly rewarded the authors of such atrocious calumnies?"'

Mr. Edmonds says that Pitt got frightened, and that the publication was discontinued at the suggestion of the Prime-Minister. It is not unlikely that Canning, now a member of the House of Commons and Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, found his connection with it embarrassing, as his hopes rose and his political prospects expanded. Indeed, it may be ques-

tioned whether a parliamentary career can ever be united with that of the daily or weekly journalist, without compromising one or both. At all events, the original 'Anti-Jacobin' closed with the number containing 'New Morality,' and Canning had nothing to do with the monthly review started under the same name.

During the Addington administration, his muse was more than ordinarily fertile. Besides the celebrated song of 'The Pilot that weathered the Storm,' composed for the first meeting of the Pitt Club, he poured forth squib after squib against 'The Doctor,' interspersed with an occasional hit at the indifference, real or assumed, of Pitt. The extreme eagerness displayed by Canning for the restoration of the heaven-born minister, as well as the independent tone he assumed in his remonstrances with his chief, may be learned from 'Lord Malmesbury's Memoirs.'

The best of his satirical effusions against Addington appeared in a newspaper called 'The Oracle,' which is alluded to by Lord Grenville in a letter of June 14, 1803, as showing a disposition to go over to the Government side: 'You will see that "The Oracle" *Philippizes*, and probably for the same reasons that produced that effect of old.' They are reprinted in the 'Spirit of the Public Journals' for 1803 and 1804. As this has become a scarce and not easily accessible compilation, we shall extract a portion of the less known squibs which the concurrent voices of contemporaries assign to Canning. To him undoubtedly belongs the song:

'How blest, how firm the statesman stands,  
(Him no low intrigue shall move,)  
Circled by faithful *kindred* bands,  
And propp'd by fond *fraternal* love!

'When his speeches hobble vilely,  
What "*Hear him!*" burst from brother Hiley;  
When his faltering periods lag,  
Hark to the cheers of Brother Brag!'

Canning's play of fancy may be traced in the concluding lines of 'Good Intentions':

" 'Twere best, no doubt, the truth to tell,  
 But still, good soul, he *means so well* !"  
 Others with necromantic skill,  
 May bend men's passions to their will,  
 Raise with dark spells the tardy loan,  
 To shake the vaunting *Consul's* throne ;  
 In thee no magic arts surprise,  
 No tricks to cheat our wondering eyes ;  
 On thee shall no suspicion fall,  
 Of slight of hand, or cup and ball ;  
 E'en foes must own thy spotless fame,  
 Unbranded with a *conjuror's* name !  
 Ne'er shall thy virtuous thoughts conspire  
 To wrap majestic *Thames* in fire !  
 And if that black and nitrous grain,  
 Which strews the fields with thousands slain,  
 Slept undiscovered yet in earth—  
 Thou ne'er hadst caus'd the monstrous birth,  
 Nor aided (such thy pure intention)  
 That diabolical invention !  
 Hail then—on whom our State is leaning !  
 O Minister of mildest meaning !  
 Blest with such virtues to talk big on,  
 With such a head (to hang a wig on).  
 Head of wisdom—soul of candour—  
 Happy Britain's guardian gander,  
 To rescue from th' invading *Gaul*  
 Her "commerce, credit, capital !"   
 While Rome's great goose could save alone  
 One Capitol—of senseless stone.'

Was it possible to say more courteously of a statesman that he was no conjuror, and that he would never have set the Thames on fire, nor have discovered the invention of gunpowder, although quite competent to rival the feathered saviours of the Capitol? The changes are rung on the Doctor with inexhaustible versatility, as in the happy parody of Douglas :

' My name's *the Doctor* : on the Berkshire hills  
 My father purg'd his patients—a wise man ;  
 Whose constant care was to increase his store,  
 And keep his eldest son—myself—at home.  
 But I had heard of politics, and long'd  
 To sit within the Commons' House and get  
 A place : and luck gave what my sire denied.'

'Ridicule,' writes Lord Chesterfield, 'though not founded upon truth, will stick for some time, and if thrown by a skilful hand, perhaps for ever.' Nick-names are serious matters, even in a grave country like England. In the correspondence of the time, Addington is almost invariably mentioned as the Doctor, and, as we stated in a recent number, Lord Holland quotes the old Lord Liverpool as having 'justly observed that Addington was laughed out of power and place by the *beau monde*.' Prior to the Reform Bill, what old Lord Liverpool must have meant by the *beau monde*, namely, the fine gentlemen (including the leading wits and orators) who congregated at the clubs in St. James's Street, exercised a degree of influence which may sound strange to politicians of our day. Yet a far more powerful and better sustained fire than was brought to bear on Addington, had been directed against Pitt by the wits of the 'Rolliad,' without any perceptible effect; and the inherent weakness of Addington's government from its formation sufficiently explains its fate, quite independently of the laughter it provoked.

When (May 7, 1804) Pitt had made up his mind to resume the Premiership, Canning, one of the first to whom he communicated his intention, had his choice of two offices, the Treasurership of the Navy and the Secretaryship of War. He chose the former, and was thereby led to take a prominent part in defending Lord Melville. Whitbread, in moving the impeachment, happened to let fall some expressions which struck Canning in so ludicrous a light that before the oration was well ended he had completed a report in rhyme:

'I'm like Archimedes for science and skill;  
I'm like a young prince going straight up a hill;  
I'm like (with respect to the fair be it said)—  
I'm like a young lady just bringing to bed.  
If you ask why the first of July I remember  
More than April, or May, or June, or November;

'Twas on that day, my lords, with truth I assure ye,  
 My sainted progenitor set up his brewery.  
 On that day, in the morn, he began brewing beer ;  
 On that day, too, commenced his connubial career ;  
 On that day he renew'd and he issued his bills ;  
 On that day he clear'd out all the cash from his tills.  
 On that day too he died, having finish'd his summing,  
 And the angels all cried, here's old Whitbread a-coming.  
 So that day still I hail with a smile and a sigh  
 For his bear with an e, and his bier with an i.  
 And still on that day in the hottest of weather,  
 The whole Whitbread family dine all together.  
 So long as the beams of this house shall support  
 The roof which o'ershades this respectable court—  
 As long as the light shall pour into these windows,  
 Where Hastings was tried for oppressing the Hindoos,  
 My name shall shine bright, as my ancestor's shines,—  
 Mine recorded in journals, his blazoned on signs.'

Useful as Canning's talent for satire had proved to his party, it tended rather to retard than accelerate his advancement to high office. Thus Lord Malmesbury (March 14, 1807) writes :—'He is unquestionably very clever, very essential to Government, but he is *hardly yet a statesman*, and his dangerous habit of *quizzing* (which he cannot restrain) would be most unpopular in any department which required pliancy, tact, or conciliatory behaviour.' In the very next month after this was written, however, Canning was made Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the administration formed by the Duke of Portland. Henceforth his contributions to the press became less frequent, and at length closed altogether, except when he was tempted by some especially congenial topic.

It was about this time that he took part in the *Musæ Cateatonenses*: a curious medley of prose and verse, occupying 200 pages of manuscript or more. The occasion was this. Lord Boringdon (the first Earl of Morley) and Mr. Legge (the Hon. and Rev. A. G.) had heard of a Swiss preacher in the City and asked Canning, then at the Foreign Office, where he (the preacher) was in the habit of preaching. Can-

ning, who knew nothing about the matter, answered without hesitation, 'Cateaton Street.' The two friends went there accordingly on the following Sunday, found no preacher, and returned as they went. This bootless expedition gave rise to a comic narrative of their adventures, written mostly by Canning, illustrated by Sneyd, and followed up by some twenty or thirty sets of verses by their friends. A manuscript copy of the whole (we believe the only copy extant) is or was at Saltram, the seat of the Earl of Morley.

The narrative, placed in the mouth of the honourable and reverend gentleman, begins by stating that, after breakfast at his lordship's house, he was shown into a small apartment, or cabinet, in which he found a copy of his own printed sermons uncut; a delicate attention which he duly appreciated. On their way in his lordship's carriage to Cateaton Street, he took a volume of them from his pocket and began reading one aloud, but stopped on seeing that his lordship was asleep; whereupon his lordship, waking up for a moment, observed: 'Pray go on; never mind me.' 'I then,' continues the narrative, 'told him two of my best stories—Nos. 9 and 15 in my note-book—but his lordship remarked that he had frequently heard both of them before.' These, given from memory, may be taken as fair specimens of this *jeu d'esprit*.

Canning was one of the three or four persons who were first consulted about the institution of the Quarterly Review, suggested by Sir Walter Scott for the purpose of counteracting what he called the widespread and dangerous influence of the Edinburgh Review. In a letter to Mr. George Ellis, dated Nov. 2, 1808, Scott says:—'Canning is, I have good reason to know, very anxious about the plan.' On the 18th he writes to the same correspondent:—'As our start is of such immense consequence, don't you think Mr. Canning, though unquestionably our Atlas, might for



a day find a Hercules on whom to devolve the burden of the globe, while he writes us a review? I know what an audacious request this is; but suppose he should, as great statesmen sometimes do, take a political fit of the gout, and absent himself from a large ministerial dinner, which might give it him in good earnest, —dine at three on a chicken and pint of wine, and lay the foundation of at least one good article. Let us but once get afloat, and our labour is not worth talking of; but, till then, all hands must work hard.’<sup>1</sup>

The request was not made, or not granted, or no Hercules could be found to bear the burden of the globe whilst Atlas was composing an article for the ‘Quarterly.’ But we learn from the same authority, that two articles on Sir John Sinclair and his Bullion Treatises, which appeared in the numbers for November, 1810, and February, 1811, were the joint production of Canning and Frere; and it was understood at the time that the popularity of an article headed ‘Mr. Brougham—Education Committee,’ which appeared in the same review for December, 1818, was mainly owing to the additions and finishing touches of the accomplished statesman. This article was professedly by Dr. Monck, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, who merely supplied the coarse cloth on which the gold lace and spangles were to be sewn,—the pudding for the reception of the plums,—and made himself ridiculous by subsequently taking credit for the wit.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lockhart’s ‘Life of Sir Walter Scott,’ vol. ii. p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> In his third letter to Archdeacon Singleton, Sydney Smith says: —‘I was afraid the bishop would attribute my promotion to the Edinburgh Review; but upon the subject of promotion by reviews he preserves an impenetrable silence. If my excellent patron, Earl Grey, had any reasons of this kind, he may at least be sure that the reviews commonly attributed to me were really written by me. I should have considered myself as the lowest of created beings to have disguised myself in another man’s wit and sense, and to have received a reward to which I was not entitled.’ The late Mr. Croker laid claim to the credit of having largely aided Canning in polishing and pointing this article.

The articles on Sir John Sinclair probably owed much of their success to the popular impression of that highly respectable and rather laughable personage. They are fair specimens of the art of 'abating and dissolving pompous gentlemen.' But the humour is spun out to tediousness; and the consequence is, that not a single passage, condensed and pointed enough for quotation, could be selected from either of them. The same remark applies to the lighter passages, interspersed amongst the weighty and solid lucubrations of Dr. Monck. That, for example, in which the proposed Commission is quizzed in Canning's peculiar manner, occupies more than a page, but we can only find room for the concluding sentences:—

'It is even affirmed, we know not how truly, that with the help of the gentlemen of the British Museum, the learned institutor (Brougham) had actually constructed the statutes of his foundation in that language of which his late researches have made him so absolute a master; and the oath to be taken by each candidate for a fellowship, and by each fellow on his admission, ran in something like the following terms: the first, *Se nunquam duo vel plura Brevia intra Biennium accepisse*; the second, of a more awful import, *Se nullas prorsus habere possessiones præterquam unam Purpuream Baggam flaccescentem omnino inanitatis causâ*.'

The last of Canning's political squibs that has fallen in our way, is the following:—

LETTER FROM A CAMBRIDGE TUTOR TO HIS FORMER PUPIL, BECOME A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT: WRITTEN IN THE YEAR (1824) IN WHICH THE RIGHT HONOURABLE FREDERICK ROBINSON, CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, REPEALED HALF THE DUTY ON SEABORNE COALS IMPORTED INTO THE PORT OF LONDON.

'Yes! fallen on times of wickedness and woe,  
We have a Popish ministry, you know!  
Prepared to light, I humbly do conceive,  
New fires in Smithfield, with Dick Martin's leave.  
Canning for this with Robinson conspires,—  
The victim, this provides,—and that, the fires.

Already they, with purpose ill-concealed,  
 The tax on coals have partially repealed ;  
 While Huskisson, with computation keen,  
 Can tell how many pecks will burn a dean.  
 Yes ! deans shall burn ! and at the funeral pyre,  
 With eyes averted from the unhallow'd fire—  
 Irreverent posture ! Harrowby shall stand,  
 And hold his coat flaps up with either hand.'

It may be doubted whether any of the clever squibs collected in 'The New Whig Guide' are by Canning, but he has been traditionally credited with the parody of Moore's beautiful song, 'Believe me, if all those endearing young charms ;' the gentleman addressed being a distinguished commoner afterwards ennobled (the First Lord Methuen), who was far from meriting the character thereby fastened on him :—

'Believe me, if all those ridiculous airs,  
 Which you practise so pretty to-day,  
 Should vanish by age and your well-twisted hairs,  
 Like my own, be both scanty and grey :  
 Thou wouldst still be a goose, as a goose thou hast been,  
 Though a fop and a fribble no more,  
 And the world that has laughed at the fool of eighteen,  
 Would laugh at the fool of threescore.  
 'Tis not whilst you wear that short coat of light brown,  
 Tight breeches and neckcloth so full,  
 That the absolute void of a mind can be shown,  
 Which time will but render more dull.  
 Oh, the fool that is truly so, never forgets,  
 But as truly fools on to the close,  
 As Ponsonby leaves the debate when he sits,  
 Just as dark as it was when he rose.'

Most of the families with whom Canning lived on terms of cordial intimacy have retained one or more specimens of his occasional verses. These playful lines were addressed to Mrs. Leigh on her wedding-day, *à propos* of a present from her to him of a piece of stuff to be made into a pair of shooting-breeches :—

'While all to this auspicious day,  
 Well pleased their grateful homage pay,  
 And sweetly smile, and softly say  
 A thousand pretty speeches ;

My muse shall touch her tuneful strings,  
 Nor scorn the lay her duty brings,  
 Tho' humble be the theme she sings—  
     A pair of shooting-breeches.

Soon shall the tailor's subtle art  
 Have fashioned them in every part—  
 Have made them tight and spruce and smart,  
     With twenty thousand stitches.

Mark then the moral of my song,  
 Oh ! may your loves but prove as strong,  
 And wear as well, and last as long,  
     As these my shooting-breeches.

And when to ease this load of life,  
 Of private care and public strife,  
 My lot shall give to me a wife,  
     I ask not rank or riches.

Temper, like thine, alone I pray,  
 Temper, like thine, serenely gay,  
 Inclined, like thee, to give away,  
     Not wear herself—the breeches !'

The best of his verses of the serious and pathetic kind are the epitaph to his son, who died in 1820 :

' Though short thy span, God's unimpeach'd decrees,  
 Which made that shorten'd span one long disease,  
 Yet, merciful in chastening, gave thee scope  
 For mild, redeeming virtues, faith and hope ;  
 Meek resignation ! pious charity :  
 And, since this world was not the world for thee,  
 Far from thy path removed, with partial care,  
 Strife, glory, gain, and pleasure's flowery snare,  
 Bade earth's temptations pass thee harmless by,  
 And fix'd on heaven thine unreverted eye !

Oh ! mark'd from birth, and nurtured for the skies !  
 In youth, with more than learning's wisdom, wise !  
 As sainted martyrs, patient to endure !  
 Simple as unwean'd infancy, and pure !  
 Pure from all stain (save that of human clay,  
 Which Christ's atoning blood hath wash'd away !)  
 By mortal sufferings now no more oppress'd,  
 Mount, sinless spirit, to thy destined rest !  
 While I, reversed our nature's kindlier doom,  
 Pour forth a father's sorrows on thy tomb.'

It would be both instructive and entertaining to trace the influence of Canning's literary taste and talents, with their peculiar cultivation and application, upon

his oratory. To his confirmed habit of quizzing might be owing that quality of his speeches which led to their being occasionally mentioned as mere effusions of questionable facetiousness; whilst to the glowing fancy which gave birth to the graceful poetry reproduced in these pages, might be traced those ornate specimens of his eloquence which have caused him to be by many inconsiderately set down as a rhetorician. We refer, for humour, to the speech on the Indemnity Bill, in which occurs the unlucky allusion to the 'revered and ruptured Ogden;' for imagination and beauty of expression, to the description of the ships in Plymouth harbour, to the comparison of Pitt's mistaken worshippers to savages who only adore the sun when under an eclipse; and to the fine comparison of the old continental system recovering after the revolutionary deluge to 'the spires and turrets of ancient establishments beginning to reappear above the subsiding wave.' Yet surely even the chastest and severest school must admit that fancy and humour add point and strength to knowledge and truth. Nor, looking to more recent examples, will it be denied that literary acquirements and accomplishments may form the Corinthian capital of a parliamentary reputation, and indefinitely exalt the vocation and character of statesmanship.

## MARSHAL SAXE.

From the EDINBURGH REVIEW for Oct. 1864.

*Moritz, Graf von Sachsen, Marschall von Frankreich,*  
 Nach archivalischen Quellen von Dr. KARL VON  
 WEBER, Ministerialrath, Director des Haupt-Staat-  
 archivs zu Dresden. Mit Portrait. Leipzig: 1863.

FEW names are more bruited abroad than that of Marshal Saxe. It is familiarly associated in men's minds with warlike renown and romantic adventure. He is the hero of a hundred tales of ambition, courage, gallantry, and intrigue, amatory or political, and his memory inspires an interest widely different from that which we feel in many renowned warriors whose military fame may haply stand higher and rest on a sounder basis than his. This is doubtless owing in great measure to the social position, career, and character of the man; but large allowance must be made for our imperfect knowledge of several curious events of his life, as well as for the artificial colouring with which French writers, regarding him as their peculiar property, have invested it. Not content with elevating all his campaigns as commander-in-chief under Louis XV. into masterpieces, they have given him credit for sundry minor exploits which fortunately are not needed for his reputation, since they are clearly not susceptible of proof.

As matters stood, Dr. Karl von Weber's was just the kind of publication required to put some future biographer in full possession of the facts; for we cannot compliment him on having supplied the striking narrative and graphic portrait for which, thanks to his acuteness and diligence, the materials are complete.

He has obviously no talent for historic scene-painting, no power of animated description, small sense of the imaginative or picturesque, no enthusiasm to kindle, and no eloquence to lead astray. His pride is to be an exact chronicler, to make a conscientious use of the treasures in the State Archives of Dresden of which he is the official keeper, and to show the superiority of the knowledge derived from original documents to that acquired from more popular and accessible sources of information. He has certainly succeeded to this extent, and we will endeavour to give our readers the benefit of his labours by as complete a summary as our limits will allow of the amended and improved narrative for which we are indebted to him.<sup>1</sup>

That mental and physical qualities are inherited is a common belief, and there are physiologists who maintain, with Savage, that superior organisation is the natural and probable concomitant of illegitimate birth. Marshal Saxe may be confidently cited in support of either theory. His father was Frederick Augustus, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, equally famous for corporal strength and moral weakness, for skill as an athlete and incapacity as a politician, for princely splendour and dissolute extravagance. To the court of this sovereign at Dresden, towards the end of 1694, came the beautiful Countess Aurora von Königsmark, like a distressed damsel in the days of chivalry to demand the protection of a

<sup>1</sup> The principal works on the same subject, to which frequent reference will be made, are *Lettres et Mémoires choisies parmi les Papiers originaux du Maréchal de Saxe*. Paris, 1794. 5 volumes. *Éloge de Maurice, Comte de Saxe*, &c., &c. Par M. Thomas, Professeur, &c. Paris, 1759. *Histoire de Maurice, Comte de Saxe*, &c. &c. 2 volumes. Dresden, 1760. *Mes Réveries, par Maurice, Comte de Saxe*, &c. 2 volumes. Paris, 1757. *Histoire de Maurice, Comte de Saxe*. Par M. le Baron d'Espagnac, &c. 2 volumes. Paris, 1775. *Biographie et Maximes de Maurice de Saxe*. Par De la Barre Duparcq. Paris, 1851. A series of articles, based on Dr. von Weber's work, from the able pen of M. Saint-René Taillandier, has recently (1864) appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

knight. She was the sister of that Count Philip von Königsmark whose tragical death at Hanover is still involved in mystery<sup>1</sup>; and her object was to procure justice against his supposed murderers and the restitution of his property to the family. The Elector (who was not King of Poland till 1697) received her as he was wont to receive handsome women, and she listened to him as fair and frail petitioners are apt to listen to wooers who can bestow or promise as well as ask favours.

The public opinion of the time was more than lenient to irregularities when the chief transgressor was of royal or quasi-royal dignity: the daughter of a noble house, far from forfeiting her place amongst her equals by becoming the mistress of a king, frequently found herself the marked object of their envy and obsequious flattery, whilst the offspring of the intrigue took rank only just below the legitimate scions of royalty. Ducal titles, with corresponding appanages and privileges, were granted to them in the leading European monarchies: the high-spirited Maria Theresa condescended to conciliate Madame de Pompadour by addressing her in an autograph letter as *Chère Sœur*; and the low-born Du Barry held a court attended by the ambassadors, at which all strangers of distinction were presented to her. It does not appear that the Countess Aurora felt at all degraded by giving birth to a son, the avowed fruit of an illicit intercourse; and although she chose the obscure village of Goslar for her confinement, no real secrecy was observed. She lost no time in procuring the paternal recognition of her offspring, and from his birth to her dying day grasped every opportunity of preferring his claims to the distinctions and establishment befitting royal blood.

He was born on the 15th or 19th October, 1696,

<sup>1</sup> See 'Edin. Rev.,' vol. cxvi. p. 196.



and a gossiping letter-writer of the period states that 'the young adventurer has begun his adventures at fifteen days old by going in a cradle with his nurse by coach from Goslar to Hamburg;' adding, 'it is said that he is about to commence his romance by putting an end to that of his mother, who is not his nurse.' It seems that her romance was already terminated: the Elector's fickleness was proverbial, and in this instance an inopportune illness of the lady had accelerated the ordinary result. She knew him too well to attempt the recovery of his affection, if that be not too strong a term for a passing fancy; but she made a gallant and sustained effort to gain and keep the sort of influence which Queen Caroline exercised over the coarse mind of George II., by abandoning all feminine rivalry and appealing by turns to his understanding or his self-love. On this ground, however, she was encountered by an able and unscrupulous minister, Count Flemming, who had made a careful study of his master's character, and has bequeathed to future premiers, similarly situated, the fruits of his observations and reflections on the best course to be pursued in such emergencies:

'The King is fond of women, it is true, and who would not be fond of them! But the King loves them to lighten the burthen of affairs, and by no means with a romantic passion: yet, by reason of the fine and obliging manners of His Majesty, the ladies to whom he has been attached have conceived the idea of becoming absolutely mistresses of his will, even to the point of becoming mistresses of his affairs. The evil has been that, amongst the ministers, some have been found complaisant enough to comply from court policy with the wishes of these favourites, which I on my part have constantly refused, offering at the same time to do so, but only by the master's orders, and never having had such orders, I have not been able in any manner to gratify them. This is why these ladies have attributed so much authority to me.'

The King showed no disinclination at any time to provide handsomely for his illegitimate children, and Flemming readily concurred in a fair and reasonable provision for most of them. Moritz, or Maurice, who from his earliest infancy is designated as Count, appears to have enjoyed every advantage of nurture and education that money and powerful patronage could bestow. In 1703 we hear of him at Breslau, near which his mother had purchased an estate, and shortly afterwards at Leipzig, under the care of a governor and sub-governor. In 1704 the King sent him under the same charge to Holland, with an allowance of 3,000 thalers per annum; and in January 1706, after an intervening visit to Saxony, his tutor, an officer named Von Stötteroggen, writes to Flemming from the Hague :

‘The dear little Count Maurice is in perfect health, and makes great progress in all he is learning. He is admired here by all the great, and he is invited everywhere on account of his amiability. He often visits the Princess of West Frise, who is here with the Princess of Radzivil, her sister. We are acquainted with many public ministers, as M. de Gersdorff, M. de Schwettau, and M. de Bothmar. They come to see us and we go to dine occasionally with them. I hope he will one day perfectly support the rank which his high birth has given him. Neither will His Majesty have misplaced his benefits, and you, sir, will have the goodness to procure us the continuation of them. According to the “Gazette,” His Majesty has instituted a new order of chivalry. It would be a token of his remembrance if the young Count could be honoured by it; a lord (*seigneur*) like him should never be without such a distinction.’

The tutor’s report may be safely accepted as an authority for the degree of consideration in which his pupil, then in his tenth year, was held amongst the great people of the Hague, as well as for his pleasing manners and attractive deportment; but his progress in learning is a wholly different matter, which the

worthy man had an obvious interest in placing in the most favourable light. The truth seems to be that Maurice's case in this respect supplied an exact parallel to the well-known one of the Duc de Richelieu, who (as he said himself) quarrelled with grammar in boyhood and never made up the difference. In writing French, then as now the language of courts and polite society throughout Europe, Saxe was entirely guided by his ear, and his syntax was frequently on a par with his orthography. No specimen of his German letters (if he wrote any) has fallen under our notice; but he confessedly found the difficulties presented by the elements of ordinary education insurmountable. Amongst the papers discovered by Dr. von Weber in the archives is a memoir of his early days by Maurice himself, preserved through the treachery of an amanuensis, who surreptitiously supplied Flemming with a copy. It is the commencement of a meditated autobiography, begun in 1727 as a pastime, and apparently laid aside when it had served the immediate purpose of occupying some idle hours. Speaking of his pupilage he says :—

‘ I was so inattentive, that it was impossible to teach me anything. It was believed that if the climate and my mode of life were changed my turn of mind would change too, and I was sent with a governor and under-governor to Holland, attended by a valet, the sight of whom was enough to give one a fit. At the Hague every effort was made to instruct me. *I remember that my teachers themselves proposed to have an iron machine put on me to compress my skull, asserting that it was half open.* I learnt much quickly, as the military exercise and mathematics; they were obliged to give up reading; for when I studied in a book and I was asked where I was, and what I had read, I did not know a syllable; it was no better with arithmetic if I was required to do sums on paper, but when I was allowed to calculate in my head, there were no sums which I had not worked sooner than others could work them with

pen and ink. *I was exactly like the devil, who does what he is not asked to do*; and I learnt perfect Dutch in less than six months without a teacher. My governor made a report of my progress, and remarked that he had given up teaching me anything, because there was in me a mixture of stupidity and recklessness with which he could not contend.'

A fresh tutor, afterwards professor at Leipzig, was called in, and attempted to teach him Latin, history, &c., like a parrot; but the task was given up as hopeless after the third lesson. He was brought back to Dresden at the end of 1708, and on the 5th of January, 1709, General von Schulenburg unexpectedly entered his apartment with the welcome announcement that the King intended to make a soldier of him at once; that he was to return thanks in person; that he was to start the next morning; that his equipage was ready; and that he need only take his valet along with him. Schulenburg was an officer of high distinction, who conducted the retreat of the Saxons across the Oder, when pursued by the Swedes, in so masterly a manner as to elicit the involuntary praise of Charles XII.: 'This time Schulenburg has conquered us.' 'It is the same Schulenberg' (adds Voltaire) 'who was afterwards General of the Venetians, and to whom the republic has erected a statue in Corfu for defending this rampart of Italy against the Turks. It is only republics that confer such honours; kings give nothing beyond rewards.' The amount of paternal interest felt for Maurice is sufficiently shown by the appointment of such a man to be his military godfather and instructor:—

'I was beside myself with joy,'—proceeds the Memoir—'that I should never more have a governor. Schulenburg had ordered me a uniform; I put it on, and decked myself with a broad sword-belt and a long sword. Gaiters *à la Saxonne* completed my military array, in which I was conducted to the King to kiss his hand. I supped with him, and I was made to drink hard to his health. The upshot of

the examination was that I was tolerably well up in geometry, drew well, and was ready in the preparation of plans. The King told Schulenburg he expected that all plans sent to him should be designed by my hand. "I desire," he continued, "that you will give the lad a good shaking up, which he requires, and without any reserve; that will harden him. Make him begin by marching to Flanders on foot."

'This direction was not to my taste, but I dared not oppose it. Schulenburg answered for me (in very appropriate words certainly, which were far from expressing my thoughts) that my only wish was that my strength might be equal to my zeal, and so forth. The going on foot pleased me least of all: I had much rather have found myself in the cavalry, and I intimated as much, but was roughly silenced. The King told Schulenburg, "I will on no account have him relieved from carrying his arms on the march—his shoulders are broad enough; and, above all, do not allow him to miss his turn of guard, unless he is ill, and seriously ill." I pricked up my ears, and thought that the King, whom I had always found so kind, was now speaking like an Arab; but, as I reflected at the same time that I was quit of governors, I forgot everything else and esteemed myself the happiest of mortals. The rest of the day was spent in leavetaking, and the next morning I left Dresden in the carriage of my general.'

At Leipzig, where they stopped eight days, he received the promised equipment, consisting of four small riding horses, with trappings complete, a berlin and twelve mules, a corresponding number of servants, and a head groom; but, greatly to his discomfiture, there was also a governor, under the deceptive title of 'gentleman.' On the 15th January, 1709, the corps was reviewed at Lützen, he was placed in the first battalion, a musquet was given him, and he was formally pledged to the standard:—

'Schulenburg, leaning upon the stone which marked the spot where Gustavus Adolphus fell, embraced me after I had taken the military oath, and said: "I hope this place may

be of as good augury to you as I draw from it: may the spirit of the great man who died here descend upon you; may his gentleness, his firmness, and his rectitude of purpose accompany you in all your dealings. Be as obedient to orders as strict in command; be never indulgent out of friendship or personal consideration, even in regard to small offences. Remain blameless in morals, and you will rule men: this is the keystone of our vocation; the other qualities which exalt it are gifts of nature and fruits of experience." I answered that I accepted the favourable omen, and that I should take care to profit by his doctrines. He embraced me a second time, and I returned to the front.'

We need hardly add that never was moral lesson more utterly thrown away, and that, if the virtues of Gustavus Adolphus had been indispensable in a commander, Schulenburg's pupil would never have risen from the ranks. The gentlemen who persist in misunderstanding the object of a test examination for the British army, may also back an unsound argument by his example; for he would most assuredly have obtained no marks for grammar, spelling, or cyphering.

He was presented the same evening to the officers of the corps, to whom he gave a supper of one hundred covers. On the 16th of January the march towards Flanders began. He was always on foot: his colonel, a man in advanced years, with some other officers, walked with him out of deference; a piper, with soldiers singing, led and lightened the way. Thus animated and encouraged, he held on manfully for some days, till his shoulders were bruised black and blue by the heavy musquet, and his feet too sore to proceed. He then rode, but the soldiers laughed at him, and he speedily resumed the march on foot. In this manner he reached Hanover, and at this point, unfortunately, all that was ever known to exist of the autobiography breaks off. It contains, however, portraits of the Polish-Saxon king and court, including a far from flattering one of Flemming, and some details of the Swedish campaign of

**1706.** His account of the celebrated visit paid by Charles XII. to Augustus Frederic whom he had sworn to dethrone, is remarkable, as resting doubtless on the best information and differing materially from Voltaire's.

It may be observed in passing, that this memoir, so opportunely brought to light by Dr. von Weber, puts an extinguisher upon the story adopted by the French biographers, of Maurice having followed his father on foot to the Netherlands in 1708, suddenly appeared before Lille, and forthwith given signal proofs of bravery. He was first under fire in the trenches before Tournay in July 1709, the place to which, thirty-six years later, he laid siege at the head of a French army; but here again Dr. von Weber sees traces of French exaggeration in the accounts of his manner of exposing himself and the risks he ran. They go on to say that when the allies, with the view of beleaguering Mons, sent a detachment of cavalry with a foot-soldier behind each horseman, Maurice was one of the first to swim a river thus encumbered, and would have been taken in the ensuing skirmish had he not unhorsed his assailant by a pistol-shot. After the battle of Malplaquet again (11th September, 1709), he is said to have manifested his satisfaction at the part he took in it by the exclamation, '*Je suis content de ma journée;*' which, though reported to do him honour, would have a precisely opposite effect if it were true, since Schulenburg left him behind on the advance and (as is proved by an extant letter from her) was thanked by his mother for so doing.

Some months afterwards, we find him still in leading-strings under his old governor, Stötteroggen; a project for placing him in the Jesuits' College at Brussels having been laid aside, principally in compliance with the entreaties of his mother, who was afraid of his abandoning the Protestant Confession in which he had been brought up. The regulations laid down by royal authority for the employment of his day sound strange, when it is

remembered that he had already endured all the hardships of a campaign like a formed soldier. He was to rise at six ; to dress in half an hour ; then prayers ; then breakfast, consisting of a single cup of tea ; the morning hours till one were devoted to study, including genealogy and an hour for drawing. At one came dancing and fencing lessons ; in the evening, two hours for arithmetic and orthography. One of the directions is that all sedentary work should be done with an hour-glass on the table, that the time might not be wasted. Another is, 'The Count having learned in this campaign many fine moral sentences, Latin and French—having even on many occasions applied them with discernment—he shall repeat them every day, and augment the number by at least three or four per week.' Before going to bed, prayer again, and reading of the Bible.

He was also to keep an exact account of his expenses to send to his mother ; but lessons in accounts were as much wasted on him as lessons in orthography. The proper relation between income and expenditure is what he never could be brought to understand. The balance at this very time was against him ; and his tutor endeavoured to show, as a justifiable cause for his having exceeded his allowance, that it was settled on an erroneous footing, which he had outgrown :— 'The young Count, by reason of his stout legs, wears man's stockings ; the stockings commonly supplied for lads of fifteen or sixteen being all too small.' The soundness of this argument was practically admitted by a royal rescript of January 1710, raising the allowance from three to four thousand dollars.

This renewed schooling was speedily exchanged for active service ; it being then the custom for boys to do duty in the field as well as hold commissions. Amongst the list of killed at Dettingen was a Comte de Boufflers, aged ten and a half, whose leg was broken by a cannon-ball : he looked on and held it whilst it was amputated,



and died with perfect calmness. Maurice was with the allied army in Flanders during the campaign of 1710, and was present at the sieges of Douay, Bethune, and Aixe. In the trenches before Bethune, his governor received a severe wound, and it is related, but still on French authority, that he exposed himself in a manner to provoke a reproof from Prince Eugene: 'Young man, learn not to confound temerity with valour.' When, in 1711, he returned to Dresden, his reputation for bravery had preceded him, and his mother profited by the advance thus made in the royal favour to provide for his immediate pecuniary wants and procure him a liberal establishment. The Königsmark property was embarrassed, and her claims on it were disputed or postponed, so that she was driven by her son's necessities to part with her plate and jewels. But she shrank from no sacrifice, and never rested till she had persuaded or driven the King to give him an estate worth 55,000 dollars, in addition to the 4,000 dollars a year.

This donation was in December 1711. In June 1713, the young Count obtained the darling wish of his heart, by being named colonel of a regiment of cuirassiers: his pension was increased to 6,000 dollars, and towards the end of the same year a marriage was arranged for him with the wealthiest heiress in Saxony. This affair is curious and instructive in many respects, and reflects little credit either on the King's use of his prerogative, or the general administration of the law in his dominions. The chosen bride, whose destiny may recall that of the heiress of the Percys—the innocent cause of the murder of Thynne by Königsmark—was Johanna Victoria von Löben. When she was only eight years old, her parents entered into a contract for her betrothal to Count von Friesen, provided he obtained her affection and retained it till she was grown up, and provided also a named lordship was settled on him by his aunt. A few days after the signature of this agreement, her father died ;

and her mother, on the expiration of the regular mourning, took to herself a second husband, an officer named von Gersdorff, who, eager to secure the property for his own family, persuaded his wife to pledge her daughter's hand to his nephew, Lieutenant von Gersdorff. She was accordingly betrothed to him in 1707, being still only nine; and, with the view of superseding or evading the prior claim of Count von Friesen, he went through the farce of running off with her without her parents' knowledge, bribed a priest to marry them in the prescribed form, and then presented her to her mother as his bride. The affair was brought to the notice of the authorities by Count von Friesen, who easily succeeded in superseding Gersdorff, but only to encounter a more formidable rival. The King, whether at the Countess of Königsmark's suggestion or from his own paternal foresight, at once resolved to secure her for Maurice, and the preliminary steps were adopted without scruple or delay. The Consistorial Court found the betrothal and marriage void, and declared the heiress free from any binding engagement. The King, assuming the guardianship justly forfeited by the mother, ordered the girl to be delivered over to the custody of a court lady, who was to be answerable for her breeding and education till she was of marriageable years. The younger Gersdorff was told to interfere at his peril: Count Friesen was bought off with a round sum of money, and before she was thirteen she was the affianced bride of the Count of Saxe.

Two of the French biographers assert that he had little inclination for the match, and was less influenced by the fortune than the name, Victoria, thinking it a good omen to be the spouse of Victory. She was delighted at her new prospects, and Dr. von Weber has printed a letter from her to her affianced lord, dated the 30th July, 1711, in which she promises to be eternally true to him, humbly begs that he will reserve

a little kindness ('ein Bisschen Gutheit') for her in return, and ends with six lines of French verse, in which the sentiment is more commendable than the syntax or the rhythm :—

'Que notre sort est déplorable,  
Et que nous souffrons de tourment  
Pour nous aimer trop constamment ;  
Mais c'est en vain qu'on nous accable—  
Malgré nos cruels ennemis,  
Nos cœur (*sic*) seront toujours unis.'

They were married on the 12th March, 1714, having been first declared of consenting age by royal rescript ; the regular termination of the minority being anticipated 'by reason of the well-known-to-Us good bringing-up of both.' The settlements were highly favourable to Maurice, who, in case of his wife's death without children, was to have two-thirds of her landed property, besides his marital right to the personalities ; and in the case of her leaving children, one-third. Her pin-money was fixed at 2,000 dollars.

Their wedded life began auspiciously enough. In the course of the following autumn she announced her pregnancy, and petitioned the King, who was setting out for Poland with her husband, not to separate them on the eve of her confinement. This took place on the 25th January, 1715, when she was brought to bed of a son, who died in infancy. The birth was notified to the King by a special messenger, a gentleman who, by way of honorary recompense, was presented with his Majesty's portrait set in diamonds, with permission to wear it instead of a decoration on his breast. On the very day of the event, the happy father nearly lost his life by a foolish act of bravado. He had undertaken to drive a sledge across the Elbe after the commencement of the thaw, his companions being Count Henry of Reuss and a friend. They had just reached the middle of the river when the ice broke, and the sledge and horse disappeared under it. Maurice and

the friend managed to clamber to a firm part, but they had the greatest difficulty in rescuing Count Henry, whose prolonged immersion made him a sadder and wiser man for the remainder of his days. The lesson was lost on the ringleader of the frolic, who had already commenced a round of dissipation, fatal to domestic happiness as well as ruinous to his newly-acquired fortune. His wife's money vanished so rapidly, that in less than five years we find his mother again appealing to the King. 'Unable' (she writes), 'to live except by borrowing, indigence daily exposes him to things unworthy of him, which must end in despair. As for Madame la Comtesse, it is already nearly four months since she took refuge with me in the Abbey (of Quedlinbourg) for the same reasons, all her revenues being for the creditors. I owe her too much not to share with her the little I have.'

This is a melancholy position for an heiress married to an embryo hero; and it is not the worst side of the picture; for his repeated infidelities were notorious, and the young Countess, on her side, unless she is much maligned, was not scrupulous as to the method of consoling or revenging herself. She is charged, on strong and multiplied evidence, with light conduct in Dresden and in the Abbey of Quedlinbourg, whilst residing there as the guest of the Abbess, her mother-in-law, who, with or without reason, ended by taking a decided part against her. Besides accusing her of supping with bolted doors in suspicious company, the Countess Aurora complained to the King that her own and her son's lives were in danger from the machinations of her daughter-in-law. The story ran that she had formed a close friendship with a young lady named Rosenacker, and after obtaining her confidence by pretending to help her in an intrigue, produced two white powders, and directed her to mix one in Maurice's coffee, 'not tea, in which it would not be strong

enough.' He would sicken and die in four months; his mother would be thrown into despair, and if the second powder was then administered to her the world would believe that she had died of grief. Miss Rosenacker hesitated, saying that the intended victims had never offended her, and, having quarrelled with her patroness, betrayed the plot.

In a subsequent letter, which, though anonymous, is confidently attributed by Dr. Weber to the Countess Aurora, the young Countess is accused of travelling with a runaway page of her husband's, and of living with him for six weeks together on one of her estates, to the scandal of the neighbourhood. Despairing, we presume, of reclaiming a woman so lost to all sense of propriety, the exasperated mother went the unpardonable length of advising her son '*de lâcher entièrement la bride à la Comtesse, qui se perdrait infailliblement.*' This counsel justifies a doubt whether the young Countess had been really guilty of anything worse than imprudence. In a frank and apparently unguarded communication with Flemming, she assured him that she had not compromised her honour; adding: '*Pour le reste, une jeune personne peut bien faire une faute, pourvu qu'elle se repente et se corrige.*' She also complained that her husband had treated her like a little girl, threatening to give her a governess to teach her how to live, had reduced her from wealth to poverty, and driven her to reside in a house more like a desert than a habitable spot. We are favoured with only two sentences of the answer:—'*Votre lettre ne mérite pas la réponse que je Vous fais, &c. 'Un homme comme moi ne se lèse pas à traiter ainsi indignement que Vous le faites.*'

Without palliating the wife's indiscretion, all must admit that the husband was principally to blame. There is no denying that he wasted her fortune by extravagance, and exposed her to temptation by

neglect. He himself was evidently conscious that he owed her some compensation, for at the beginning of 1720 he caused a memorial, setting forth all his grievances, to be presented to her, with an offer 'to conceal her misconduct from the public, and take all the blame upon himself, if she would desist with a good grace.' She complied, and a most improbable account of the ensuing steps taken by him, as well as of the proceedings to which they gave rise, is sanctioned by several writers of respectability. They affirm that he contrived to be seen in flagrant transgression by six servants posted for the purpose: that he was thereupon dragged to trial and condemned to death: that the King pardoned him on the evening of the same day, or, according to another version, caused the formal pardon to be placed under his napkin at dinner the day after; and that the sentence of divorce followed immediately.

All this is pure invention. Although the real documents found in the archives clearly indicate collusion, the prescribed forms were observed. The Countess applied to the Consistorial Court for a divorce, alleging infidelity with a single person, but stating that she had additional cases in reserve. The Count appeared, and said he could not deny the allegation; and on the court's suggesting that haply the affair might have arisen from a misunderstanding or animosity, he replied that the terms on which he and his wife had stood were indeed not friendly, but that he could not deny the fact with which he was charged. Sentence of divorce was accordingly pronounced, and was notified to the King by Maurice in terms of contemptuous indifference:—

'I was yesterday before the Consistory, that is, in the house of M. Leibziger, and after the president had pronounced, with all the politeness in the world, a judgment which ordinarily is not polite, the superintendent wished to

regale me with a dish of his own cooking—for the priests are always eager to meddle with everything. But I abridged the harrangue, saying, “Sir, I know very well what you are going to say: we are all great sinners, that is true, the proof is complete.” I made my bow, and left what is called the Supreme Consistory in meditation on the grand truth I had just announced to them.’

The lady, notwithstanding the dilapidation of her fortune and the passing slur upon her fair name, soon found a second husband, had a large family of children by him, and lived happily and respectably. The Count, far from meditating a second marriage, dismissed the whole matter so completely from his thoughts, as to have almost forgotten that he had ever been married at all. Madame de Pompadour writes soon after his death, ‘*A propos* of poor Saxe, he had sometimes strange ideas: I asked him one day why he had never been married. “Madame,” he replied, “as the world goes at present there are few men of whom I should wish to be the father, and few women of whom I should wish to be the husband.”’ This answer was not remarkable for gallantry: however, it has some appearance of reason. He added that a wife was not a convenient article of furniture for a soldier. An epigram in verse, in the same spirit, was generally attributed to him in Paris:

‘Malgré Rome et ses adhérents,  
Ne comptons que six sacrements;  
Vouloir qu’il en soit davantage  
N’est pas avoir le sens commun,  
Car chacun sait que mariage  
Et pénitence ne sont qu’un.’

His married life lasted rather more than seven years, in the course of which he managed to get rid of 200,000 dollars of his wife’s property, and the whole of his own, besides taxing the royal bounty to the uttermost. The truth is, he could not exist without stirring occupation or excitement of some sort: and

when wearied by domestic life, he was in the habit of betting high at cards and billiards. In a match at billiards with Count Castilli, for a large sum, he exclaimed at the end of every game, 'I believe that the other is a better player than I : ' yet he went on ; and on another occasion he was too drunk to know what he was about, and was disagreeably surprised at being told that he had lost 1,040 ducats, for which he was induced to sign a bill. Being subsequently convinced that he had been cheated, he repudiated the debt under circumstances in which a man of nice sense of honour would regret to be placed. It incidentally appears that during many years he was paying twelve per cent. interest to creditors of name and position, who had assisted him by loans. To do him justice, this state of idleness was none of his choosing : for he never missed an opportunity of active and honourable employment. Thus, in 1716, he was in the field and before Stralsund with his regiment, and an adventure befell him in which his courage and readiness of resource in danger were conspicuously displayed.

He wished to go to Sendomir, where Saxon troops were stationed ; and a false report that a truce had been concluded between the Saxons and the Confederated Poles induced him to undertake the journey in the company of five officers and twelve servants, without further escort. Towards midday he arrived at a village and took up his quarters in the house of a Jew. He had scarcely seated himself at table when an attendant rushed into the room with the news that a numerous body of Poles were entering the village. Some say 800 cavalry, including 200 dragoons, but the Countess Königsmark puts them at from 400 to 500. The Count's plan was formed on the instant. It being impossible for him with his small troop to defend the court, he suffered the enemy to occupy it,



and confined himself to the defence of the house. They forced their way into the ground floor, but the stairs were removed, holes were bored in the floor of the second story, through which shots were fired and lances thrust at those below ; and the repeated attacks of the assailants were successfully repulsed, although some of the little garrison were killed and several wounded, their gallant leader having received a shot in the thigh. Night put an end to the conflict, which had lasted five hours, and the Poles set a watch round the house ; but Maurice, taking advantage of the darkness, made a sally with the eleven men (some wounded) which he had left, cut down the sentinels, seized the required number of horses, and effected a safe retreat into the neighbouring forest. This exploit will certainly not lose by comparison with the foolhardy and useless attempt of Charles XII. at Bender to defend his house against the Turks.

Maurice's first visit to France, the destined scene of his glory, was in the spring of 1720 ; and the object, in addition to the collective desire of his well-wishers to keep him employed, may be gathered from a letter written by the King's desire to Flemming, in which the writer says : ' The King has directed me to consult your Excellence whether you would approve Count Maurice de Saxe's engaging in the service of France, where he might learn the trade of war ; whilst in this country, where we neither have nor wish to have war, he would never learn anything.' The answer was that the King's thought was good and just, ' provided he (the Count) be diligent, for as there are ample means in France of learning something, so are there likewise of forgetting what one has learnt.'

He was precisely the kind of adventurer to make his way in France under the Regency : handsome, gallant, dissolute, pleasure-seeking, with a made reputation for reckless bravery and a rising one for military

skill. He was at once named *maréchal de camp* with an allowance of 10,000 livres, and encouraged to purchase an infantry regiment: a step not approved by his father, who wished him to wait till one was given him. Authorities vary as to the price; one naming 35,000 thalers, another 130,000 écus de France. Flemming writes:—‘It is apparently from the King’s purse that the Count de Saxe reckons on paying for his regiment. Agreed, if the *écu* is reckoned at three livres de France, but if they are to be our good crowns, I must say that at this price we might have got him made Lieutenant-General and bought him two regiments.’ The money was obtained with some difficulty, and the new Colonel immediately proceeded to turn his purchase to good account. Besides paying the strictest attention to the discipline of his regiment, he taught it a new exercise of his own invention, which is highly commended by the Chevalier Folard in ‘Commentaries on Polybius.’ At the same time he assiduously studied mathematics, mechanics, and fortification, and busied himself with the construction of a machine, also of his own invention, for propelling vessels against the stream. He afterwards took out a patent for it, and induced a capitalist to join with him in introducing it into general use. It failed as a speculation, and is stated to have consisted merely in turning two wheels by a horse. But if these were paddle-wheels, his discovery, differing only as regards the motive power from propulsion by steam, was an important step in the right direction.

His mother was so pleased with his improved mode of life, that she wrote to the King to express her joy that he had not forgotten for a moment the orders of His Majesty, having neither gambled nor played the *petit maître*. ‘As Paris’ (she added) ‘is a sufficiently great trial for a young man, I hope your Majesty will

be satisfied with his conduct, and will henceforth vouchsafe him your good graces.' The assurances contained in this letter were somewhat overstrained by maternal partiality, for if he had not indulged in what is regularly termed play, he (to use Dr. von Weber's expression) had burnt his fingers in Law's project, which was the all-absorbing topic about this time, and he was the reputed hero of a love affair, which created much scandal, and narrowly missed being followed by the most fatal consequences.

As reported by Hoym, the Saxon minister at the French Court, the story ran that the Prince de Conti, taking umbrage at Maurice's marked attentions to his handsome wife and hoping to surprise them together, suddenly burst into her apartment armed with sword and pistol; and was contemptuously told by the Princess, on being made aware of his object, that if he had really expected to find a man with her, he would have taken good care not to make his entrance in that fashion. All over Paris it was believed that Maurice was there, and had been killed or severely wounded by the Prince. By an odd coincidence, he had sprained his foot the day before and was confined to his room. This of course tended to confirm the prevalent rumours; nor is it quite clear even now that the sprain was not a pretence; for the Princess, in the interview in question coolly told her husband that she had seven modes of deceiving him, six of which she particularised, concluding with the agreeable information: 'As for the seventh, I shall not tell it you, for it is precisely the one which I am employing at present.'

Maurice returned to high play in 1723, and lost at a single sitting 3,000 dollars to a French general, after mentioning which, Hoym reports that there was no hope of his reform. In May 1724, he made an excursion to England, professedly only to buy horses and intending to preserve a strict incognito; but Coq, the Saxon agent, told

him that he must be presented to the King (George I.), with whom he had a long conversation in the royal closet. He was afterwards frequently invited to the Court and the hunting parties at Windsor. He also visited Kensington and Hampton Court, and attended the races at Newmarket, where he found an opportunity of exhibiting his personal strength at the expense of a scavenger who provoked a quarrel with him: he threw the man, to the great delight of the bystanders, into his own mud-cart, in which he was nearly stifled.

The whole of Maurice's life teems with odd or striking incidents, but we now pass on to a passage of it which directly connects him with history and caused the attention of all Europe to be fixed upon him. Early in the eighteenth century it became evident that the hereditary line of von Kettlers, Dukes of Courland, was on the point of dying out, and in 1725 it survived only in the person of the reigning Duke, a childless and widowed man of seventy. The Duchy having been held since 1561 as a fief of the republic of Poland, the Poles looked forward to its speedy annexation or incorporation; but this did not suit Russia or Prussia and was especially disliked by the Courlanders. They therefore looked anxiously about for a person who might be the founder of a new dynasty, and after long hesitating amongst a multitude of candidates, they made choice of the Count of Saxe.

He was principally indebted for the preference to female influence; an essential part of the scheme for his elevation being his marriage with a Russian Princess, either Anna, a daughter of Peter the Great, the young and handsome widow of a deceased Duke of Courland, or her younger sister, Elizabeth. Both of these ladies, captivated by the Count's reputation for gallantry and good looks, emulously favoured him.

He, on his side, adroitly kept them in suspense as to his intentions, although at first he inclined towards Elizabeth, a girl of sixteen; the Dowager Duchess being some years older and more attractive from the fullness than the freshness of her charms. Her conduct had not been irreproachable—she would have formed a marked exception to the females of her family if it had been—and the Saxon agent, who sent Maurice a highly attractive portrait of Elizabeth, adds: ‘Certain malicieux disoit un jour qu’elle n’auroit jamais le cœur de se poignarder, si elle donnoit par occasion un coup de canif au parchemin conjugal.’ It was thought that the Empress Elizabeth, her mother, would sanction the alliance, and the young Princess, who, although she had never seen Maurice, had heard much of him, was speedily led on by an adroit confidante, a friend of his, to set her heart upon it. She is reported saying to this friend: ‘I do not wish to imitate princesses who are ordinarily victims of state policy; I wish to marry according to my taste, and have the man I like for my husband.’ On which the friend replied: ‘I know one that you love with all your heart.’ ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I know whom you are going to mention. I believe it, like you; but I have not yet seen him: tell me what sort of man he is.’ ‘Suffice it to say,’ rejoined the friend, ‘that he is worthy of a crown.’

The King’s personal wishes were naturally on his side, but his minister, Flemming, and the Republic of Poland were adverse; and just as he was on the point of starting for Courland and Petersburg under the pretence of forwarding his mother’s claim to the Königs-mark estates in Esthland, the Count de Manteuffel brought him an order from the King not to go. The minister found him booted and spurred for the journey, and, on being asked whether the order was positive, replied in the affirmative; upon which the Count left

the room suddenly, after saying that he was anxious to obey the King in all things, but that if he did not set out, all would be lost for him, and that he would consider what he had to do. He told some ladies that whoever overtook him must travel very fast, and before the King, who had retired to rest, was apprised of his intention, he had started with a small band of followers. At Mittau he fell in with the Princess Anna, on whom he made the most favourable impression, and, without absolutely committing himself, he induced her to regard his and her interest as identical; for he wrote to his mother:—‘She shows me every encouragement, and has herself written to the Czarina with the view of becoming through me Duchess of Courland a second time.’ Having learnt that the title of Count shocked the Duchess of Courland, he also wrote to Manteuffel, begging him to contrive that in a letter, which he prayed the King to address to Prince Menschikow, he might be named simply, ‘Mon fils légitime Maurice de Saxe.’ He probably meant *légitimé*. The King so far complied with the request as to drop the title of Count in the letter, and it was thenceforth dropped by Maurice.

His cause was warmly espoused by many other women of rank or celebrity, who stopped at no sacrifice to forward it. The famous Adrienne Lecouvreur sold all her ornaments and sent him the proceeds, amounting to 40,000 livres. Of a Polish woman of rank, the Countess of Vielinska, a contemporary letter states: ‘She has lent her silver plate and even the person of her admirer, M. d’Astel, to look a little after the Count de Saxe.’ Flemming writes of his chief supporter amongst the magnates of Courland, Grand-Marshal Count Pocietz: ‘He has engaged in this affair, like Adam in the original sin, led astray by his wife;’ and Le Fort declared that his opponents must hold themselves prepared for ‘une guerre de quenouilles.’

The important day at length drew on, and despite of a peremptory prohibition to the Landtag to meet for the purpose, the deputies did meet at Mittau to the number of thirty-two, chose their returning officer, attended a grand banquet given by the Princess Anna in honour of the occasion, and, on the 28th June, 1726, unanimously elected Maurice of Saxony their Duke-successor. A regular diploma of his election was delivered to him and he immediately began taking measures to establish his claim.

At first the aspect of things was smiling enough ; he had promises of recognition and even support from Russia, and he had hopes that his father would be willing and able to neutralise the opposition of the Poles ; who insisted on calling their monarchy a republic by way of intimating that their first magistrate was more like a president than a king. He began to form plans of government, and announced his determination to nurse the heavily charged revenues of the Duchy, as soon as they came under his management, with exemplary care and economy. After remarking that nothing was so ridiculous as the mock splendour of a petty court, he proceeds : ‘ Plenty of muskets and bayonets in my armoury, and few courtiers in my anti-chambers—at the same time I shall establish some public amusements, to attract the nobles to the town, which will polish them, make commerce flourish, augment expenditure, and consequently industry.’

He was soon rudely awakened from his dreams of sovereignty. Prince Menschikow, a disappointed competitor, entered Mittau on the 10th July, with a numerous suite, supported by a body of Russian dragoons, and on the 12th a personal interview took place between the rivals. Nothing material came of it, except the worst possible opinion formed by Maurice of the Prince, of whom, writing to Manteuffel, he says :—‘ It would be difficult to express what obstinacy, folly, and ignorance

I have found in him. The vanity inseparable from these qualities exists in him in its highest degree.' . . . 'On his asking me how I proposed to sustain myself, I replied that I knew very well I was not in a condition so to do, but that the affair was sustaining itself.' The Prince, who at the same time seemed not indisposed to be bought off, indulged his arrogance to the extent of threatening to send the electors to Siberia. Some writers have stated that, in dealing with Maurice, he did not confine himself to threats. They say that 800 Russians made a night attack on the house of the Duke Elect, who had only sixty men with him : that he beat them off with the loss of sixteen killed and many wounded : that a damsel who was with him disguised herself in his clothes, and let herself down from the window by a cord, to draw attention on herself and give him an opportunity of escaping ; that at length the guard of the Duchess Anna came up, and drove away the Russians. In all this there is not a syllable of truth ; although, hearing that an attack was meditated, Maurice made preparations for repelling it, and Menschikow soon afterwards left Mittau, leaving his interests in the care of Prince Dolgoroukow, whose mode of forwarding them is treated with sovereign contempt by Maurice. The Duchess Anna was indefatigable in her endeavours to secure the neutrality, if not the support, of Russia ; and it was quite upon the cards that he might have become Czar Consort as well as Duke of Courland through her, had he not wantonly offended her in a manner which it was impossible for a high-spirited woman to forgive.

Mr. Carlyle somewhat broadly indicates the ground of quarrel when, after comparing her cheeks to Westphalia hams, he says that 'the big widow discovered that he did not like Westphalia hams in that particular form : that he only pretended to like them.' She had assigned him an apartment in her palace ; opposite, on



the ground-floor, lodged one of her ladies, with whom he had clandestine interviews. One night, when she was paying him a visit, there was a heavy fall of snow: to spare her tender feet he took her on his shoulders and carried her across the court. Unluckily, they encountered an old woman with a lantern, who, at the sight of a figure with two heads moving towards her, uttered a shriek of terror. He tried to extinguish the lantern by treading on it, but his foot slipped, and he fell with his fair burthen on the old woman, who now redoubled her shrieks till the watch came up and recognised the actors in the scene, which soon reached the ears of the Duchess. The similarity of this story to one told of Charlemagne's daughter, coupled with the habitual tendency of the biographers of Maurice to engage him in romantic adventures, might well justify a suspicion of its authenticity, were it not in such perfect keeping with his character, as well as warranted by Dr. von Weber, who seldom errs on the side of credulity.

Another piece of ill-luck was the death of the Czarina Catherine, always his personal well-wisher; after which Russia became undisguisedly hostile to him, and the Poles, no longer kept in check by either of the great Powers, and carrying their titular King along with them whether he would or not, proceeded to the most summary mode of compelling Courland, which they insisted on regarding as a rebellious province, to surrender its independence and its new Duke. On the approach of the Russian and Polish troops, he retired with a chosen band to an island in a lake, where he was beleaguered and in danger of being taken by the Russian commander, who refused to allow him more than two days for reflection, and hinted at '*un pays éloigné en perspective*,' meaning Siberia. Not wishing to cause a useless effusion of blood, Maurice swam the lake alone on horseback,

and escaped to Winden ; his little band, twelve officers, thirty-three servants, ninety-eight dragoons, and one hundred and four militia infantry, became prisoners to the Russians ; nine cannon and all his baggage also fell into their hands. The original diploma of his election was saved by his faithful valet, Beauvais. He and his immediate followers had been already proscribed by the Polish Diet, and a price was put upon his head. But the successful faction dealt lightly with his partisans, and he himself was permitted to reach France, where a fresh mortification was in store for him, which he bore with more equanimity than the disappointment of his ambition.

The moment he arrived in Paris he hurried to his beloved Adrienne, and was immediately shown into her boudoir. On the writing-table lay a letter which he opened without ceremony, and found it to be a love-letter from the Count d'Argental, condoling with her on the dreaded return of Maurice. Scarcely had he mastered its contents, when Adrienne entered and welcomed him with the greatest tenderness. He speedily left her under the pretence of changing his travelling dress, and, hastening to D'Argental, requested him to accompany him to her apartment. The favoured adorer complied in silence, under the full conviction that a mortal duel was at hand, and was agreeably surprised when he was presented to the lady with these words : ' Here, my little dove ; accept this gentleman at my hands : the conquered must crown the conqueror.' Adrienne, consummate actress as she was, fell into convulsions, sighed, and talked of killing herself, but thought better of it, and lived on to be poisoned by a jealous rival in 1730.

The actress was refused Christian burial in consequence of her profession, and M. Taillandier censures her former lover for leaving the duty of protesting

against the indignity to Voltaire;<sup>1</sup> but the peculiar termination of their intimacy, combined with his known indifference to religious matters, must be admitted as some palliation for the alleged want of feeling or gratitude in this particular instance. We also have reason to doubt whether M. Lemontey, the author of an 'Eloge' on Adrienne, has not drawn on his own imagination for the picture which he gives of her 'discovering the hero and endeavouring to polish the soldier.' 'She brought him acquainted with our language, our literature, and inspired him with the taste for music, reading, all the arts, and that passion for the theatre which followed him even to the camp. We may say of the conqueror of Fontenoy and his beautiful instructress, that she taught him everything but war, which he knew better than anybody, and orthography, which he never knew at all.'<sup>2</sup>

But we are anticipating. Some years are yet to elapse before we find our hero at the head of armies, and some intervening passages of his life are too important to be passed over, although there seems no necessity for accompanying him in his frequent journeys between Saxony and France. Community of tastes and studies had brought about a close intimacy between him and the Chevalier Folard; and in 1732 he followed the example of his friend by becoming a military author. In the course of that year, he composed the work entitled '*Mes Rêveries*.' Two copies of what passes for the original manuscript are preserved in the Royal Library at Dresden, and the

<sup>1</sup> Verses entitled '*La Mort de Mademoiselle Le Couvreur, célèbre Actrice*.' (Œuvres.)

<sup>2</sup> '*Œuvres de Lemontey*,' 1829. Tome iii. p. 329. M. Alexandre Dumas, in the '*Confessions de la Marquise*,' says that Adrienne was poisoned at the instigation of the Duchess of Bouillon from jealousy of the *liaison* with Saxe, and died with her hand in *his* and her head on the shoulder of Voltaire! Those who remember Rachel in the part of her celebrated prototype, have seen a greater actress than Adrienne.

concluding words are :—‘I have composed this work in thirteen nights. I was ill, so it may well show symptoms of fever; that ought to be my excuse. As to regularity and arrangement, as well as elegance of style, I have written like a soldier, and to dissipate my *ennuis*. Done in this month of December 1732.’

The most conflicting judgments have been passed on this book. Whilst some have seen in it the masterpiece of a great tactician, others have treated it as the ‘eccentric production of a powerful but irregular mind, whose strength lay in action or in a kind of intuition under the pressure of emergencies, not in calm analysis or scientific exposition. The book, however, has great merits, and is especially remarkable for the clearness and good sense with which it draws the line between innovation and experience, theory and practice, in the art of war; an art which it had been, perhaps is, the fashion to regard as only capable of being taught (if of being taught at all) empirically. ‘All the other sciences,’ he exclaims, ‘have rules and principles: war alone has none.’ This is true only in a limited sense—that it has few, if any, received as axioms; and most of those who have shone pre-eminent in it have submitted to a steady course of professional instruction. ‘Condé,’ says Retz, ‘is born a captain; which never happened but to him, Spinola, and Cæsar.’ Yet Condé was an assiduous reader of military books, and Cæsar is surely an ill-chosen example of a born captain. One of the most ardent students of the art of war that ever lived was Napoleon.<sup>1</sup>

We must not forget to state that, shortly before the composition of the ‘*Rêveries*,’ Maurice made the ac-

<sup>1</sup> ‘In this great art of commanding armies in war, science comes not little by little, but all at once. The moment one sets about it, one knows from the first all that there is to know. A young prince of eighteen arrives from the Court by post, offers battle, wins, and then he is a great captain for life, and the greatest captain in the world.—*Paul Louis Courier*.

quaintance of Frederic the Great, then Crown Prince of Prussia, an acquaintance which soon ripened into admiration and esteem on both sides. Each invariably mentions the other as one of the most consummate tacticians of the age. A general worthy to rank not far below them, the Marshal Duke of Berwick, had a similar prescience of Saxe's military capacity whilst still untried on a fitting arena. On his arrival in the camp before the lines of Ettling, he was received by Berwick with these words: 'I was about to send for 3,000 men, but you are as valuable to me as such a reinforcement.' He amply justified this commander's confidence. At a critical moment he put himself at the head of 100 grenadiers, attacked a troop of hussars, and killed their commandant with his own hand, after receiving a sabre-cut on the head, which was fortunately blunted or turned aside by the iron guard of his hat. It was at the end of this campaign, in which he served under the Duc de Noailles, that he wrote to the Minister of War in the proud tone of conscious superiority:—

'Prince Eugene is put to flight, and all yields to the glory of your arms. It is I who have cleared the way for it: it is I who have found means of penetrating into inaccessible places, who have disposed the troops, who have attacked, led, and conquered at the head of your grenadiers, exposing myself to dangers which still make those who were witnesses of them tremble. It is fourteen years since I have had the honour of being in the service of the King as *maréchal-de-camp*: I am now nearly forty, and I am not of a sort to be subjected to rules or to grow old to reach steps of promotion.'

He was made Lieutenant-General in the French army in August 1734, and on the strength of this promotion declined an offer made through the Prince of Lichtenstein to join the Austrian service and rely for rapid advancement on the friendly offices of Prince Eugene. His patriotism has been called in question

for serving against his countrymen, but he never actually fought against Saxony, which alone can be regarded as his native country. There was not even a talk of a fatherland in those days, and adventurers of his stamp—Eugene and Berwick, for example—troubled themselves little under what standard they led or served. It must also be remembered that in 1741 he wrote to the Count de Bruhl, then Prime Minister of Saxony, to offer to take the command of the Saxon army in the then probable contingency of its being actively engaged, and received for answer, after six weeks' delay, that the command had been promised to the Duke of Weissenfels. He lay under one marked disadvantage in France, which he might partially have escaped in Germany. The princes of the blood and the great nobles were jealous of him, and he was not made a Marshal, or trusted with the command-in-chief of an army, until the proved incapacity of those placed over him seriously threatened discomfiture and disgrace. They were constantly depreciating him. Thus the son of the Duc de Luynes writes to his father:—‘The Count de Saxe leads the French without precaution or detail and *à la Tartare*; yet he is the one above all others who aims most at what is great.’

The taking of Prague was an exploit which put detraction to shame and fixed his reputation on a firm footing. It was taken by a night attack planned by him after personally reconnoitring the defences of the place by creeping along the ditch. Near the principal gate was a bastion thirty-five feet high, and opposite to it on the outside a kind of mound, formed of the dirt and rubbish of the town. Whilst the bastion was scaled by the grenadiers, he was to post himself with troops on this mound to attract the fire of the garrison; and the drawbridge was to be simultaneously assailed, over which the dragoons, which constituted the chief

part of his force, were to rush as soon as the way was open. The success was complete, although some of the scaling ladders broke from the number of men who crowded on them at once. A company of grenadiers was on the rampart before their approach was discerned, and they were rapidly reinforced. The drawbridge was lowered, and Saxe, galloping in at the head of his cavalry, reached the bridge which divides the town in two. It was barricaded and defended by cannon and infantry ; but the officer in command, finding that the Saxons had entered the other part of the city and that he was about to be placed between two fires, laid down his arms. These particulars are taken from one of Saxe's letters to the Chevalier de Folard, ending thus : — ' It (Prague) was taken the same day on which my grandfather took it in 1640, and furnishes the first instance of a town being carried in the night-time, and sword in hand, by the French without being plundered.'

In the course of the following month he signally retrieved the honour of the French arms by rallying a body of infantry and cavalry which had been driven back in confusion by the Austrian rearguard. After this exploit, for which he was publicly thanked by the Duc de Broglie, he repaired to Dresden, where Frederic the Great arrived soon afterwards in the hope of persuading the King (Maurice's half-brother) to a more active co-operation in the war. Frederic Augustus was as fond of pleasure as his father, and Bruhl, who inclined towards Austria and dreaded Prussian aggrandisement, calculated on preventing serious conversation by a grand dinner, opera, and ball. The dangerous topic was introduced in Maurice's presence, whilst the royal party were yet at table, when Bruhl announced that the opera had begun. ' Ten kingdoms to conquer,' says Frederic, ' would not have detained the King of Poland a minute longer. To the opera they went, and the King (of

Prussia) obtained, despite of all opponents, a final resolution.<sup>1</sup> A Saxon corps was attached to the Prussian army, and was so roughly handled within a month of its junction that Maurice, then with Frederic and doubtless remembering Bruhl's refusal of the command, sent him the following laconic billet by way of despatch :

'Jigelan (Iglan), le 19 Févr. 1742.

'Vous n'avez plus d'armée.

'MAURICE DE SAXE.'

On his return to the French army he was directed to take the direction of the siege of Egra, which, strong as it was, was surrendered to him without a blow after all his dispositions for an assault were complete. His name sufficed to paralyse the commander and the garrison, and the credit accruing from the exploit was not diminished by their faint-heartedness. The Emperor Charles VII. caused a *Te Deum* to be sung in Frankfort to celebrate the event, and wrote to him : 'Why can't you be everywhere ?'

Egra was taken on the 19th April, 1742, and on the 1st of May Maurice had abandoned the field of his rapidly culminating reputation, and was on his way to St. Petersburg through Dresden. The ducal crown, which still retained all its pristine attractions for him, had been again trailed across his path. Eager as he was to try his hand at governing, he must have been deeply mortified at finding that he had actually missed two golden opportunities : that either of the two princesses, to whom his vagrant and vacillating addresses had been paid, could and probably would have gratified his highest ambition, had he wooed her as she may well have expected to be wooed, had he paid her the common compliment of a semblance of devotion and fidelity. Anna, on her accession to the imperial

<sup>1</sup> 'Œuvres posthumes,' vol. i. p. 226. Dr. von Weber adds that the opera was *Papirio*.



throne in 1730, had neither scruple nor difficulty in giving Courland to her favourite, the Duc de Biron, by birth a Courland peasant. On her death in 1740, Biron became regent during the minority of her great-nephew, but was displaced by a conspiracy planned and executed by the mother of the infant Czar in November 1741; whose supremacy lasted rather more than a year, during which she caused her brother-in-law, the Duke of Brunswick, to be elected Duke of Courland. On the 6th of December 1741, another conspiracy broke out, resulting in the expulsion of the regent, the dethronement of her son, and the accession of the Princess Elizabeth. The Duke of Brunswick fell with his patroness, and Courland was once again at the disposal of Russia; Poland not being strong enough to lay hands on it.

Maurice had a powerful friend at the court of the new Czarina in the French Ambassador, the Marquis de la Chetardie, who thought that her youthful preference would revive and plead powerfully for him. La Chetardie was renowned for the splendour of his entertainments, and the very evening of Maurice's arrival he gave a magnificent supper to introduce him to the most considerable persons of the court. The next morning he was presented to the Czarina, who, at a masked ball the same evening, danced the second contredanse with him. The next day but one La Chetardie gave a dinner in his honour, to which she came in man's clothes, and remained a large part of the evening. A series of festivities ensued, some of them strikingly characteristic of the period and the place. On the 18th June, the Chamberlain Woronzow gave a dinner which was prolonged till nine in the evening; then the whole party mounted on horseback to accompany the Czarina, who rode through the illuminated streets in a riding-habit. A terrible rain was pouring down, but no one wore a cloak.

Towards midnight, the party, wetted to the skin, paid a short visit to the Kremlin, where she showed the Count the coronation ornaments and other state jewels. Then they mounted again to ride to La Chetardie's palace, in front of which was a magnificently illuminated fancy building with two fountains of red and white wine. Here a grand supper was served, and 'it was nearly six in the morning,' writes a guest, 'when her Majesty, putting the sun to shame by her beauty, retired highly pleased.' Another week was spent in the same manner, and then Maurice got for answer, communicated through the Chancellor, that the Czarina, anxious that the Courlanders should retain their ancient rights, could not interfere in his favour, although she would not act against him.

The sole advantage he gained by the journey was the sense of his value produced by his absence, during which the French army underwent a series of reverses. Soon after his rejoining it, Count Poniatowski writes :—'I have never seen an army so badly managed as this : if the Count de Saxe, who is obliged to think of everything, were taken from us, I do not know what would become of us.' At the conclusion of the campaign, an apartment in Versailles was assigned to him, and the King held long consultations with him in the presence of D'Argenson, the Minister of War. The first time he went to the theatre at Paris he was received with acclamations. Yet neither popular nor royal favour could overcome the corrupt influences about the court. After a high command had actually been assigned to him, D'Argenson, trembling for his place, was induced to give it to the Prince de Conti. 'That,' wrote the Saxon minister, 'is the secret motive which has actuated M. D'Argenson. Such at present is the situation of the Court of France.'

The management of a hazardous enterprise, requir-

ing extraordinary capacity and interfering with no conventional claims, could be confided to him without exciting jealousy. Accordingly he was named to the command of the troops (10,000) which were to accompany Charles Edward in 1744 on his meditated descent in England. A storm interrupted the disembarkation: the wind (as the Count remarked) was decidedly not Jacobite: the English fleet hove in sight, and the expedition was eventually abandoned. The King, warmly pressed by Broglie and Noailles, took advantage of this occasion to confer the long-delayed bâton of Marshal, with the reservation of a privilege or two, not affecting the military grade, on account of his religion, which, it is said, he would willingly have changed could he have done so without the suspicion of an interested motive. In the ensuing campaign he commanded the covering army, whilst the main army, nominally under the King in person and really under Noailles, undertook the siege of several strong places. The campaign was prosperous, although not marked by any signal success, and Voltaire, referring to the new Marshal's share in it, says:—

‘To encamp and decamp *à propos*, to cover his country, to subsist his army at the expense of the enemy, to advance to their ground when they were on the country to be defended and force them to retrace their steps—to render strength useless by skill—this is what is regarded as one of the masterpieces of the military art, and this is what Marshal Saxe did from the beginning of August till November (1744).’

When the time approached for opening the campaign of 1745, the campaign of Fontenoy, the national call for Marshal Saxe was as loud and unanimous as that for Sir Charles Napier after the disaster of Cabul, or for Lord Clyde at the breaking out of the Indian mutiny, but his health excited the most lively apprehensions. ‘So high an idea,’ wrote the Saxon

minister, 'is entertained of the capacity and experience of the Marshal, that people are generally convinced that the loss of this general would be a misfortune for France in the present circumstances, as she has scarcely any capable of replacing him amongst the quantity of general officers with whom the kingdom swarms.' He showed symptoms of dropsy, and when, on his preparing to start for Flanders, Voltaire asked him how he could set out in such a state of weakness, he made the memorable reply: '*Il ne s'agit pas de vivre, mais de partir.*' Yet such was his want of self-restraint that an entire coach-load of loose women, as usual, formed part of his equipage; and his physician, Senac, was driven to the strange expedient of getting sentinels placed round his quarters, with strict orders to deny admission to all persons of the female sex. He was tapped soon after his arrival in camp, and, being too ill to mount on horseback, was obliged to be carried about in a carriage of basket-work, in which, surrounded by his staff, he passed the night preceding the battle of Fontenoy.

Marshal Saxe's campaigns and battles from 1745 to his death form a prominent part of the history of Europe, and have been repeatedly described in detail. But his share in the glories of Fontenoy has been unduly diminished by the most popular writer of the eighteenth century, followed by the most eminent of the subsequent historians of the period. Voltaire's account is that the English were carrying all before them: that charge after charge had been tried in vain: that the battle was given up for lost: that the Marshal was taking measures to secure the retreat; and that a disorderly council was held in the King's presence, who was adjured, on the part of the Marshal and in the name of France, not to expose himself further. The historian continues in these words:

'The Duc de Richelieu, Lieutenant-General and serving

as aide-de-camp of the King, came up at this moment. He had just been reconnoitring the English column near Fontenoy. Having thus gone to every side without being wounded, he presents himself out of breath, sword in hand, and covered with dust. "What news do you bring us?" said the Marshal: "What do you advise?" "My news," said the Duc, "is that the battle is gained if you choose; and my advice is that you instantly bring four guns to bear on the front of the column; whilst this artillery is shaking it, the Household (*Maison du Roi*) and the other troops will surround it: we must fall upon them *comme des fourageurs*." The King was the first who assented to this idea. Twenty persons set off. The Duc de Pequigny, afterwards Duc de Chaulnes, goes to direct the pointing of the four guns: they are placed opposite the English column. The Duc de Richelieu gallops on the part of the King to put the household troops in motion. Prince de Soubise gets together his gendarmes; the Duc de Chaulnes his light horse; all form and march, &c.'

Mr. Carlyle, after describing the irresistible advance of the British column, continues:

'In fact, the battle now hangs upon a hair; the battle is as good as lost, thinks Maréchal de Saxe. His battle lines torn in two in that manner, hovering in ragged clouds over the field, what hope is there in the battle? Fontenoy is firing blank, this some time: its cannon balls done. Officers in Antoine are about withdrawing the artillery,—then again (a new order) replacing it awhile. All are looking towards the Scheld bridge, earnestly entreating His Majesty to withdraw. \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile the French clouds are reassembling a little: Royal Highness (the Duke of Cumberland) too, is readjusting himself, now got 300 yards ahead of Fontenoy—pauses there about half an hour, not seeing his way farther. During which pause, Duc de Richelieu, famous blackguard man, gallops rapidly from Maréchal to King, suggesting, were cannon brought *ahead* of this close deep column, might they not shear it into beautiful destruction, and then a general charge be made? So counselled Richelieu: it is said the Jacobite Irishman, Count Lally, of the Irish Brigade, was

prime author of this notion—a man of tragic notoriety in time coming. Whoever was the author of it, Maréchal de Saxe adopts it eagerly, King Louis eagerly: swift it becomes a fact. Universal rally, universal simultaneous charge on both flanks of the terrible column: this it might resist, as it has done these two hours past; but cannon ahead.”

According to Voltaire, the Duc de Biron took upon himself the responsibility of countermanding the Marshal's order to the right wing to withdraw for the purpose of covering the retreat; and, in fact, if these versions are to be credited, Saxe had about as much to do with the movements which decided the day as Marshal Beresford with the victorious advance of the Fusilier Brigade at Albuera. Prose was deemed too weak to pay a fitting tribute to Richelieu: his alleged exploit is embalmed by the same pen in poetry:

‘Je ne veux pas que l'univers  
Vous croie un grave personnage  
Après ce jour de Fontenoi;  
Où, couvert de sang et de poudre,  
On vous vit ramener la foudre  
Et la victoire à votre roi.’<sup>2</sup>

After describing the defeat of the English column, which he greatly exaggerates, for it retired in order, Voltaire adds:

‘In the middle of this triumph the Marshal had himself carried to the King: he had just strength enough to embrace his knees and to utter these precise words: “Sire, I have lived long enough: I wished to live out this day to see your Majesty victorious. You see on what battles hang.” The King raised him and embraced him tenderly. He (the Marshal) told the Duc de Richelieu, “I shall never forget the important service you have done me.” He spoke in the same manner to the Duc de Biron. He (Saxe) told the King,

<sup>1</sup> ‘*History of Frederick the Great*,’ vol. iv. p. 121. Earl Stanhope takes the same view of the battle at its turning-point. *History of England from the Peace of Utrecht*, vol. iii. p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> In Voltaire's ‘*Poème de Fontenoy*,’ also, the Duc de Richelieu is the hero of the day.

“Sire, I must reproach myself with one fault. I should have placed another redoubt between the wood of Barri and Fontenoy; but I did not believe that there were generals bold enough to risk the passage at this point.”

The essential part of the statement rests on a letter from the Marquis d'Argenson to Voltaire the day after the battle :

‘Your friend, M. de Richelieu, is a genuine Bayard : it is he who gave and executed the counsel to attack the infantry *comme chasseurs ou comme des fourageurs*, pell-mell, hand down, the arm shortened, masters, valets, officers, cavalry, infantry, all together. This French vivacity, of which so much is said, nothing resists it : it was the affair of ten minutes to gain the battle by this *botte secrète*.

Nothing is said of the four guns, and the credit of telling where they were when the Marshal was looking about for artillery (not of suggesting their use) is due to a subaltern.

Now the battle was fought on the 11th of May (New Style), and a full official account of it is contained in a despatch from the Marshal himself, dated Camp before Tournay, May 13th, to the Minister of War. From this it appears that all fell out very nearly as he had anticipated : that the victory was the result of a pre-conceived plan : that he never despaired of the result ; and that all the decisive movements were in pursuance of his personal orders adapted to the emergency. The notion that he adopted as a happy hit the alleged suggestion of Richelieu to attack like foragers or sportsmen—that is, without regard to order—is preposterous. His distinct directions to the troops preparatory to the grand effort were to charge together and charge home :

‘Seeing our infantry (thus runs the despatch), the household (*Maison du Roi*), the carabiniers, and a great part of the cavalry, much discomfited by the different charges they had made uselessly against this English infantry, I went to

look for the carabiniers, and told them that they must make a last effort, that the preceding charges had not succeeded because they had advanced with too much vivacity, and had not given time to the different reserves that I had on my left to reach this closely-formed battalion, which gave the English time to repulse one attack after the other; and that it was necessary to make the effort at the same time. Monseigneur the Dauphin asked my permission to charge at the head of the household. Judge, Sir, of the uneasiness such a presence may occasion a general. In short, everything succeeded beyond our hopes.'

The most vivid picture of the charge is given by Espagnac :

' Marshal Saxe had ordered that the cavalry should touch the English with the breasts of their horses : he was well obeyed. The officers of the chamber charged pell-mell with the guards and the mousquetaires ; the King's pages were there sword in hand ; there was so exact an equality of time and courage, so unanimous an impression of the checks they had received,—so perfect a concert,—the cavalry sabre in hand, the infantry with bayonets fixed,—that the English column was shattered to pieces and disappeared.'

When it is asked why the prior isolated charges were permitted, Espagnac, who was present and in the Marshal's confidence, is ready with the reply :—

' So long as the enemy had not taken Fontenoy or the redoubt, his successes in the centre were disadvantageous, being without a point of support. The further he advanced, the more he exposed his troops to be taken in flank by the French he left behind. It was then essential to restrain him by repeated charges ; too feeble, it is true, to promise a great effect, but gaining time for the disposition of the general attack on which the victory depended.'

Espagnac also states that the Count de Loewendal, who held an important command, rode up to Saxe at the critical moment, and, comprehending the plan and situation at a glance, exclaimed : ' This is a grand day for the King, Marshal : those fellows there cannot



escape him.' The Marshal probably never calculated on the firmness and dogged intrepidity with which the English, denuded of support by the backwardness of the Austrians and Dutch, pushed forward to a position not much unlike that of the light cavalry brigade at Balaclava; and he had just ground for apprehension lest a panic should seize the officers or courtiers about the King; whom, for this reason, he was most anxious to remove. According to Loss, the Saxon minister, who had his information fresh from the fountain-head, the Duc de Noailles, commander-in-chief in the campaigns of 1743 and 1744, elicited a sharp expression of impatience from Saxe by speaking of the battle as lost; and the Duc de Biron's interference obviously arose from a misunderstanding of the plan. We know, at all events, that a change in the position of some troops led to a murmured exclamation amongst the royal suite: 'The Marshal is ill; his health is failing; his brain is getting confused.' Louis went straight to him, and in a loud clear voice addressed him thus:— 'Marshal, when I confided to you the command of my army, I meant that every one should obey you; I will be the first to set the example.'

The Marshal, speaking of the King, says in his despatch:—

'He did not disturb my operations by any order opposed to mine, which is what is most to be feared from the presence of a monarch surrounded by a court, which often sees things differently from what they are. In short, the King was present during the whole affair, and never wished to retire, although many opinions were for that course during the whole of the action.'

To this may be added the conclusive testimony of the King's private letter to Cardinal Tencin, a copy of which was sent to Dresden by Loss:

'We owe the victory we have just gained to the good dispositions of the Marshal de Saxe. He has taught us valuable

lessons, if we are willing to profit by them, but I fear he will not be our teacher long, if he remains in his present state. It would be an irreparable loss for us, which I should sustain with regret, above all because I should not be able to reward the great services he has done us.'

He was blamed for not turning the defeat into a rout, and it appears from the despatch already quoted, that, seeing the English cavalry advancing to support their infantry, he halted his troops a hundred paces from his battle-ground. His very words are: 'As we had enough of it, I thought only of restoring order amongst the troops engaged in the charge.'

The battle of Fontenoy decided not only the surrender of Tournay, which it was fought to relieve, but that of Ghent, Oudenarde, Bruges, Ostend. Yet this series of successes, although honours and rewards were lavished on him, did not protect him from misrepresentation and slander. He was accused of playing into the hands of Austria by neglecting Germany for the Low Countries; and his old rival, the Prince de Conti, succeeded in getting the appointment of *generalissimo* over his head, which induced Saxe to exclaim to Valfons:<sup>1</sup> 'France is the country of falsehood, and gratitude for services performed does not habitually reside in it.' This nomination, fortunately for France, did not include the command of the army in the field, which was continued to the Marshal; and in the campaign of 1746 he fought and won the battle of Raucourt. The first announcement of his intention to fight and win it was made at his camp theatre the day before; these lines being sung or recited by way of epilogue:—

'Demain bataille, jour de gloire.  
Que dans les fastes de l'histoire  
Triomphe encore le nom Français,  
Digne d'éternelle mémoire.'

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<sup>1</sup> '*Souvenirs du Marquis de Valfons.*' Paris: 1860. Valfons was on his staff and much trusted by him.

A troop of actors was a regular part of his equipage. Writing to the director, Favart, he says :—‘Do not believe that I regard it as a simple object of amusement; it enters into my political views, and into the plan of my military operations.’ Favart owed his appointment to his wife, a handsome woman, who acted, sang, and danced to admiration; and he was told his services were no longer wanted when he presumed to join his illustrious employer’s suite without her. Following the example of *la belle Gabrielle* in this respect, Madame Favart, for some time at all events, preferred her husband’s affection and her reputation to all that a hero and conqueror could lay at her feet, and only yielded (if she did yield) to measures of coercion, as indefensible as those which Henry IV. was not ashamed to employ in a similar dilemma. She was arrested at Lunéville, where she had come to meet Favart, and was carried to the Ursuline convent, where she was detained some time, and then exiled to Issoudin. The Marshal threw the blame of these persecutions upon the pious people of the Court; but he alone, as the object of them had good grounds for believing, was the cause.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The true character of this transaction appears from a publication not mentioned by Dr. von Weber, entitled : *Manuscrit trouvé à la Bastille concernant deux Lettres-de-Cachet lâchées contre Mademoiselle de Chantilly et M. Favart, par le Maréchal de Saxe*. Paris : 1789. The manuscript is a report addressed to the Marshal by the *exempt* charged with the execution of the *lettres-de-cachet*, dated March 23, 1750, and signed with his name, *Meusnier*. The pamphlet also contains four or five letters from the lady to the Marshal, with his replies, during the period of her detention, November and December, 1749. She thanks him for past kindness and liberality, but expresses a fixed determination not to purchase her release by compliances which her conscience and religion condemn. He tells her in words that her persecutors are ‘*une bande de dévots que l’on n’a pas voulu me nommer* ;’ but gives her clearly to understand that she herself is the mistress of her destiny. She was eventually set at liberty on his application, and she was living with him as his mistress shortly before his death.

The *exempt’s* report contains a description of her which does not confirm the tradition of her charms :—‘*Elle est âgée de vingt-deux à vingt-trois ans, petite, malfaitte, sèche, les cheveux bruns, le nez écrasé,*

Before winning the battle of Raucourt, which was not followed up, he had added Brussels to his other conquests; and it was on his way from this city to Paris that, passing through Péronne, his carriage was stopped by the custom-house officers. 'Que faites-vous, canaille?' exclaimed their chief; 'les lauriers sont-ils contrebande?'

Another compliment paid him about this time was an offer of a seat in the Academy, which he had the good sense to refuse.

The third act in the bloody trilogy which immortalises his name (to borrow the expressions of a French biographer) was the battle of Lawfeld, fought on the 2nd of July, 1747, where, as at Fontenoy, the English bore the brunt and were left unsupported by their allies. The village, held by 10,000 English and Hanoverians, was the key of the position; and when the first attack of the French was repulsed, the Marshal turned to Valfons:—'Well, what do you think of this? We are beginning badly; the enemy keeps his ground.' 'Monsieur the Marshal,' replied Valfons, who reports the colloquy, 'you were dying at Fontenoy, you beat them; convalescent at Raucourt, they were beaten again; you are too well to-day to fail in crushing them.' The second attack being equally unsuccessful, the Marshal in person rallied his troops for the third, and led them to within twenty paces of the village, where he pointed out to their commander the precise point where they were to break in. 'Both commanders,' says Earl Stanhope, 'showed high personal gallantry in the foremost ranks; the Marshal being once nearly taken prisoner, and the Duke (of Cumberland) also once mixed up with a squadron of

*les yeux vifs, la peau assez blanche, enjouée par caprice, minaudière, fourbe et dissimulée: elle chante et danse passablement bien.* Her paternal name was Cabaret Durancoray, and it is doubted whether she was married to Favart.

French horse.' Valfons relates that when, towards the end of the battle, Saxe was about to order a charge of cavalry, he found at the head of the first squadron he approached a pale, thin officer, and whispered to Valfons, with a laugh: 'Let us look for another: this one will bring us bad luck.' The next was a stout, ruddy-faced man, to whom Saxe immediately gave the order, crying out, 'Ah, this is my man!'

As usual, he was blamed for not improving the victory, and with justice, for Valfons says: 'He proved to me that, not wishing to finish the war, he ought only to gain battles by halves.' In another place he says: 'The Marshal was, like all generals, too great in time of war to desire peace and secure it by too decisive successes.' The Duke of Marlborough fell under the same suspicion; and the temptations are certainly great. When peace was signed in October, 1748, the Marshal dropped from military governor of all the conquered places in the Netherlands with 10,000 louis-d'or a month, and commander-in-chief of a victorious army, into a retired officer on a pension and allowances. It is true that these were on an extraordinary scale of liberality, enabling him to maintain a princely hospitality and indulge his peculiar fancies to his heart's desire. A single fête which he gave in honour of the Princess de Sens at Chambord cost him 400,000 livres: he built and maintained a hospital and a theatre, and kept two tables, one of eighty and one of sixty covers. But he mourned over his occupation gone, he longed for the pomp and circumstance of his glorious trade as well as for its solid perquisites, and he could not refrain from sighing out, 'Peace is concluded, and we are about to fall into oblivion: we are like cloaks; no one thinks of us unless when it threatens rain.'

In this state of restlessness, no project was too wild, provided it offered a fresh field of action on a grand

scale. At one time he thought of improving on the design of the Marquis de Langallière, by building a throne for himself in Madagascar; at another, of colonising and ruling one of the Antilles, of which he obtained a grant. It has been confidently stated that he was by turns on the point of contesting Corsica with King Theodore, and of assembling the Jews of Central America with the view of becoming their king. The year before his death he petitioned Louis XV. (seemingly without result) to grant him the appointments, rank, and honours enjoyed by princes of sovereign houses established in the kingdom.

The manner in which his forced leisure was occupied may be inferred from the Marquis d'Argenson's summary of his tastes: 'Il n'aime que la guerre, le mécanisme et les beautés faciles.' In a letter to his half-brother, Augustus the Second, he says: 'Il ne faut pas se conduire dans la famille avec la délicatesse qu'on a avec sa maîtresse: il faut vouloir et ordonner: avec sa maîtresse l'on ne fait que souhaiter.' On one occasion, when he went in search of adventures to a masked ball at the opera, he wore the Highland costume: 'Scrupuleux sur l'habillement (writes General von Fontenay), il n'avoit point de culotte: c'est un lieu où elle est souvent embarrassante.' Madame de Pompadour wrote to him after the battle of Lawfeld:—'They say, Marshal, that in the middle of the operations and fatigues of war, you still find time to make love. I am a woman, and do not blame you: love creates heroes and makes them *sages*.' When she was seen walking with him, a bystander called out, 'Voilà l'épée du Roi et son fourreau!' In whatever sense the royal favourite meant the word *sages*, her maxim was not applicable to her illustrious friend, whose love (if it deserved the name) impaired both his reputation and

his constitution, and caused or accelerated his death.

One of his later *liaisons* has become celebrated by its fruit. From his daughter by an opera-singer, descends the far-famed Georges Sand (Madame Dudevant), who records the fact in her 'History of my Life.' He was endowed by nature with the physical advantages of his father, whose feats of strength he was wont to emulate; but Madame de Pompadour says that, in the latter years of his life, he was an ambulatory corpse (*cadavre ambulant*), of which there remained nothing but a name. In a letter, after his death, she says: 'Il entretenoit des filles qui l'ont tué, et c'est une comédienne, Mdlle. Favart, qui lui a donné le coup de grâce.' He died suddenly of inflammation of the bowels, on the 30th November, 1750; his last words, addressed to his physician, Sénac, being, 'You see, my friend, the end of a fine dream;' or, as some report, 'Doctor, life is but a dream: mine has been fine, but short.' He left between fifty and sixty thousand pounds sterling to be divided amongst legatees, and directed that his body should be buried in lime if possible, 'in order that nothing may shortly remain of me in the world but my memory among my friends.'

More than one striking tribute to his memory may be found in the writings of Voltaire, who dedicated to him the 'Défense du Mondain.' But the most valuable has been paid by a more competent judge of such a man,—by Frederick the Great, who writes in July 1749:—'I have seen the hero of France, this Saxon, this Turenne of the age of Louis XV. I have derived instruction from his conversation, not in the French language, but in the art of war. This marshal might be the professor of all the generals of Europe.' Yet this marshal, far from being a pedant in the art,

expressly lays down that in war it is often necessary to act by inspiration: 'if we were always obliged to give a reason for adopting one course rather than another, we should be frequently at a loss: circumstances are felt better than they are explained, and if war depends on inspiration there is no need of troubling the oracle.' Although he had his inspired moments when rules were disregarded and caution set aside, although (so to speak) he finessed boldly on occasions, he never exposed his army to unnecessary risks, and in the act of advancing always provided for a retreat. Unlike Napoleon who shrank from no sacrifice to gain his point, or Marlborough who was accused of exposing his troops with a view to the sale of the vacant commissions, Marshal Saxe was chary of the lives of his men. When an officer of rank proposed an expedition, saying it would cost only eighteen grenadiers, he replied tartly, '*Only* eighteen grenadiers! eighteen lieutenant-generals, if you like!' He pointedly remarked:—'I suspect those officers who are continually asking for detachments to go against the enemy. They are generally like an equestrian statue that has always one foot lifted up to march and never moves.'

Although he enforced the strictest discipline, his manners were unconstrained and free. Once, when white neckcloths were the prescribed wear, those worn by his army at a review had nothing white about them but the name. 'My lads,' he said, 'if it is intended that your neckcloths should be white, you must be ordered to wear black.' A soldier was condemned to be hanged for stealing an article worth only a thaler. Saxe, meeting him on the way to the gallows, asked: 'Were you not an out-and-out fool to risk your life for a thaler?' 'Marshal,' replied the criminal, 'I have risked it day after day for ninepence-halfpenny.' This reply saved his



life. When his soldiers were guilty of excesses, he punished the officers, on the ground that it was their business to keep their men under due restraint.

What was said of Marlborough is equally true of Saxe : he never fought a battle he did not win, nor besieged a place he did not take. If it be asked why, with such qualities and capacity, so displayed and recognised, he does not fill a more prominent place in the military Valhalla, it may be replied, because these were exerted for no elevated object and produced no very memorable or lasting results. His battles were none of them the decisive battles of the world, and, so far as posterity is concerned, the strong places he took might have been so many pieces on a chess-board. He never established or upset a dynasty : won or saved a kingdom : overran a continent : destroyed, vindicated, or restored a nation's liberties. The popular instinct which deifies a Garibaldi and depreciates a Saxe, is not so far wrong upon the whole. Animated by patriotism, by a deep sense of duty, by lofty ambition, by religious enthusiasm, or by any great cause in which he felt an absorbing interest for its own sake, a man of his genius, with scope for its expansion, might have changed the face of Europe. But he fought in gilded fetters, without one ennobling or generous impulse, without a cause, a country, or a creed : he was a soldier of fortune, a superior being of the Dugald Dalgetty species at best ; and, acting on the condottiere principle of never enabling his employer to become independent of him, he clipped the wings of Victory on its eagle flight towards the loftiest pinnacle of fame.

Marshal Saxe, then, cannot be ranged in the first class of great captains or conquerors, with Alexander, Cæsar, Hannibal, Napoleon, Frederic, Wellington, and three or four others whose names might provoke

controversy. But he is entitled to a high place in the second class, alongside of Spinola, Montecuculi, Wallenstein or Turenne; and his adventurous life, crowded with brilliant episodes, may be advantageously studied as an excellent illustration of the period in which he flourished—of its courts and camps, its statesmen and warriors, its modes of thought and action, its stage of political and intellectual progress, its manners, morals, and society.

SYLVAIN VAN DE WEYER.<sup>1</sup>

(From 'THE TIMES'.)

IF the founders of the Belgian monarchy were to be grouped for an historic picture, a conspicuous place in it belonged of right to M. Van de Weyer, who had other and independent claims to a full, complete, and discriminating biography, like that for which we are indebted to M. Juste. It is in all respects worthy of the subject. Composed with M. Van de Weyer's approval, and enriched by his communications, it inevitably partakes somewhat of the nature of an *éloge*; but he merits an *éloge* better than four-fifths of the personages on whom preachers and Academicians have lavished their choicest flowers of rhetoric, and the partiality of the biographer is betrayed rather by the recorded commendation of those whose words carry weight—*laudari a laudato*—than by highly-coloured statements or flattery of his own.

It was the pride of Themistocles, when twitted with his deficiency in the polite arts, to be able to say, 'Tis true I never learnt how to tune a harp or play upon a lute, but I know how to raise a small and inconsiderable city to glory and greatness.' It might be the juster pride of M. Van de Weyer that he could combine lightness with solidity, that he could trifle gracefully with tongue or pen while converting subject provinces into an independent nation. We are attracted to his Life quite as much by his wit, his literary accomplishments, and his social career, as by

<sup>1</sup> *Les Fondateurs de la Monarchie Belge.* Sylvain Van de Weyer, Ministre d'État, Ancien Membre du Gouvernement Provisoire, et Ancien Ministre Plénipotentiaire de Belgique à Londres. D'après des documents inédits. Par Théodore Juste. Bruxelles, 1871. (2 vols. royal 8vo.)

his statesmanship ; nor are we at all afraid that the political element will unduly predominate in the following outline of his career.

His *Pensées diverses* include a new reading of

‘Et genus et proavos et quæ fecimus ipsi,  
Vix ea nostra voco.’

‘There is modesty in pluming one’s self on one’s birth, one’s fortune, or that which accident or favour has done for one. It is an indirect confession of the want of innate worth.’ Neither M. Van de Weyer, nor his biographer on his behalf, has exhibited any of this peculiar modesty. Nothing is said of his descent or genealogy, beyond the simple statement that he was born in 1802 ; that his father, after having been a captain of Volunteers, was then exercising the functions of special commissary at Amsterdam, and was subsequently appointed a judge of the Tribunal of First Instance at Brussels. We also learn that his mother was remarkable for strength of character and mind ; thus adding another to the many instances of gifted men formed by mothers or endowed by them with the best and brightest of their qualities.

He was first intended for the Dutch Navy, and was among the cadets of the *École de Marine*, who were passed in review by Napoleon in 1811 ; but his studious habits and inclinations, manifested in early boyhood, speedily caused the first intention to be given up, and after a summary examination he was admitted a student in the Law Faculty of the University of Louvain. His principal instructor was M. Van Meenen, the editor of the *Observateur*, the organ of the Liberal party, to whom he served his apprenticeship in journalism as well as in philosophy and law ; and in 1820 we find him in Paris, the bearer of letters from M. Van Meenen. Here he met the poet Béranger, who was lost in wonder on hearing from him that the

new generation in Belgium were not animated by the slightest desire of a return to the French.

The future champion of Belgian independence seemed always bracing his nerves for the grand effort by resistance to tradition and authority. When the time arrived for taking his doctor's degree, he positively refused to comply with the established precedent of choosing the text of the required thesis from the Code Napoléon. He presented a Latin dissertation on 'The Reality, the Knowledge, and the Natural Practice of Duty,' and vowed that, unless it was accepted, he would publish it as 'Thesis Rejected by the Faculty of Law in the University of Louvain.' The Faculty gave in, and he followed up the victory by a vigorous article in the *Courrier des Pays-Bas*, in which he vehemently assailed the professorial censors to whom the theses of young doctors were submitted.

We need hardly remind our literary readers that M. Van de Weyer is one of the most distinguished members of the Philobiblon Society, and it is curious to mark at how early an age he acquired the peculiar taste and knowledge which that learned body was instituted to promote. At the beginning of 1823, having just attained his twenty-first year, he became a candidate for the place of librarian of the city of Brussels. By way of testing his capacity, he was shut up with thirty editions of the fifteenth century, which he was to describe in detail without any book of reference at hand. The result of this crucial test was his nomination to the place; to which the custodiership of the precious collection of manuscripts transmitted from the Dukes of Burgundy was subsequently annexed.

In 1825, he published his *Pensées diverses*, and as these were republished among his *Opuscules* in 1863, they may be taken to anticipate his mature reflections on mankind. Their general tone is opposed to that of

Rochefoucauld. 'A *mot* of goodness'—runs one of them—'surpasses a *bon mot* by all the superiority of the heart over the mind.' 'A cold morality'—runs another—'is almost always a false morality.' What will the ladies say to this?—'J'aimerais mieux que l'on appelât les femmes le *Bon Sexe* que le *Beau Sexe*.' How many are there that would rather be called good than handsome or pretty?

The embryo party-leader knew what he was talking about when he laid down—'One does not sacrifice one's self for a party that hesitates; a party must take its line,'—'*il faut qu'un parti prenne son parti*.' He says 'J'ai vu plus d'un homme s'arrêter dans un noble élan vers le vrai, pour ne pas compromettre ce qu'on appelle, dans le monde, *une position*.' This might have formed the motto of his next essay, entitled '*Il faut savoir dire Non*,' in which he points out the errors and follies of which so many of us are constantly guilty from moral weakness, from unwillingness to face a passing ridicule or encounter momentary blame:

'Be immovable in a "No" once pronounced. This will shock at first in what is called the world, where opposition is unbecoming, where people excuse bad morals (*les mauvaises mœurs*) and do not excuse *le mauvais ton*. Rise superior to it. Disdain the judgments of these men, spoilt by finery, and you will retain over them the inappreciable advantage of a strong will directed by a comprehensive and constantly applicable rule.'

In 1827, he was appointed Professor of Philosophy at the Museum of Sciences and Letters at Brussels, and delivered an inaugural discourse, which was highly commended by M. Victor Cousin. Literary and political fame is not likely to contribute to professional success in any country, but M. Van de Weyer rapidly rose to a distinguished position at the bar. In particular, his forensic eloquence was constantly in request for the defence in political prosecutions against

the journalists of the Opposition, who, being tried by judges without a jury, were commonly found guilty as a matter of course and subjected to heavy fines or imprisonment. During a spirited defence of M. Beaucarné, editor of the *Catholique*, he was frequently interrupted by the official prosecutor addressing him as *Monsieur Van de Weyer*. 'The learned gentleman,' he retorted, 'ought to know that I am here *Maître Van de Weyer*. I give him this lesson, and, in sign of independence (putting on his cap), *je me couvre*.'

Acting in the spirit of Grattan's death-bed advice to his sons, M. Van de Weyer was as ready with his pistol as with his pen. Conceiving his honour wounded by some remarks in the *Journal de Gand*, he hurried to Ghent with a friend to call out the editor, and the insulting expressions were withdrawn. When, therefore, the time for the grand struggle arrived, he was in capital training for the part he had to play and the work that was cut out for him.

The shock of the French Revolution of July operated like electricity on the Belgians, who felt towards the Dutch, with whom they had been arbitrarily coupled in 1815, much as the Venetians felt towards the Austrians till their chains were broken at Sadowa. On the 25th of August, 1830, the insurrectionary movement began at Brussels, where the houses of the most unpopular functionaries were sacked by the populace, and the ensigns of royalty thrown down. The day following, the notables of the city, with the staff of the Civic Guard, met at the Hôtel de Ville to adopt measures, not for suppressing the tumult, but for taking advantage of it to enforce the redress of grievances; the intolerable one being the junction with Holland, although nothing was said about a separation till the plot thickened and it became safer to advance than to recede.

M. Van de Weyer, besides acting as secretary to the

meeting, was named one of five deputies to draw up an address to the King, and the predominant position tacitly accorded to him may be inferred from the circumstance, that the communications of the Prince of Orange with the patriotic party were principally through him. The object of these was to convert the revolted Provinces into a separate State under the presidency of the Prince. But the King had no notion of surrendering any portion of his dominions in favour of a son whom he distrusted: the compromise was rejected, and the Belgians, throwing aside all semblance of loyalty, proceeded to construct a provisional government, or rather a series of provisional governments, to complete and consolidate their independence. The formation of one of them is thus described by M. Gendebien, one of the founders, whose share in the great work has not yet been commemorated by M. Juste :—

‘After this sitting (September 18) Van de Weyer and I led Félix de Mérode into the embrasure of one of the windows of the *salon* of the so-called Council. We then and there constituted a provisional government of us three. In the contingency of our being separated by events, it was agreed that two together should sign for them—that is to say, should be authorised to add the signature of the third.’

M. Van de Weyer’s ready wit gave point to his good sense, proving that excellent service may be done to the cause of order by a pun. In the midst of a stormy meeting that was getting dangerous, some one shouted out, ‘It is not words we want; it is blood’—*c’est du sang.* ‘*Du sens commun,*’ retorted Van de Weyer, and shouts of laughter gave an opportune turn to the mobocracy.

On another occasion he interrupted an orator who was indulging in the Danton or Robespierre vein with ‘‘89, yes; ’93, no.’ Despite his efforts, backed by the best of his party, there was an approximation to ’93 in



the struggle for power and the confusion of authority, if not in bloodthirstiness. There were successively, or altogether, a Regency, a Commission of Safety, and a *Réunion centrale*, besides the Provisional Government of three; and there was a time when, between them, they had brought things to such a pass, that Van de Weyer, compelled to take refuge in Valenciennes, announced on his arrival to the friends who had preceded him that all was lost. This was on the 22nd of September. The prospect brightened on the 23rd, when the refugees, reassured as to the disposition of the people, determined to return. The little troop set out, headed by Van de Weyer, pistol in hand, and distributing an address beginning, '*Aux armes, braves Belges; aux armes!*' The '*braves Belges*' responded to the appeal. The Royal troops withdrew towards Malines, and the Provisionary Government was once more in possession of the capital. They were followed by M. de Potter, whose triumphant entry raised some alarm lest he should occupy the palace and assume the Dictatorship. The functionary who came to caution them was asked by Van de Weyer, 'Have you an apartment at your disposal?' 'Yes, my second floor.' 'Return—offer it to Potter, he will accept it. There is no such thing as a Dictator on a second floor.'

While this was going on, the Prince of Orange sent Van de Weyer a pressing request, through an aide-de-camp, for an interview at Antwerp. 'Does the Prince command the citadel and the troops?' 'No,' replied the officer, after some hesitation. 'Return, then, to the Prince; tell him that I was on the point of complying with his invitation, but that I have an instinctive horror of all citadels and troops which are not commanded by his Royal Highness.'

While the Belgian cause was prospering at home, serious doubts were raised as to its reception abroad. Would the Five Powers consent to so grave a rent in

the Treaty of Vienna? Would England sanction the movement? Would France, ever on the watch for annexation, resist the temptation of the opportunity? To ascertain these points and conciliate support, M. Van de Weyer, by common consent the best qualified for the mission, repaired to London, and speedily ascertained that there was no adverse interference to be dreaded on the part of the Wellington Ministry, unless steps were taken for a union with France, which, it was intimated, would be vehemently opposed.

From the leaders of the Liberal party, who soon afterwards acceded to power, he obtained warm assurances of support, although Lord Palmerston could with difficulty be induced to consider any other arrangement until the hope of inducing the Belgians to accept the Prince of Orange as their King or First Magistrate was at an end. 'The more,' he wrote, 'that country is drawn back to Holland, the better for Europe and itself.' This view was strongly advocated by Lord Ponsonby, the English representative of the London Conference at Brussels, who, on M. Van de Weyer's declaring that the people would have nothing to do with Orangeism, exclaimed, 'The people, the people! Are you aware that within eight days I could have you hanged at the first tree in the Park by this very people on whom you rely?' 'Yes,' replied M. Van de Weyer, 'I believe that with time and plenty of money you might; but I could have *you* hanged in five minutes, and hanged *gratis*. Don't let us play at this game.' They both burst out laughing and shook hands.

Something like this occurred on the Middlesex hustings between Colonel Luttrell and Wilkes, who had given vent to his well-known contempt for the sovereign people in an undertone. 'How would you look,' said Luttrell, 'if I were to repeat aloud what you have just been saying?' 'How would *you* look?' retorted Wilkes. 'I should declare it to be a pure invention

of your own, and you would be torn to pieces by the mob.'

Lord Palmerston, yielding to circumstances, shook off his Orange predilections and contributed more than any other foreign statesman—foreign as regards Belgium, we mean—to establish the new Monarchy on a firm footing. Lord Aberdeen took an opposite line, and on the opening of the Session of 1832 delivered a studied oration in favour of the King of Holland and his claims. M. Van de Weyer replied by a pamphlet, in which, after describing the oration as a mosaic made up of ill-assorted materials borrowed from Dutch speeches and despatches, he went on :—

' Facts, dates, reasons, assertions, oratorical movements, personal convictions, all is borrowed from them, and your Lordship's parliamentary pride has condescended to the part of docile and faithful echo of notes-verbal and diplomatic pieces. Nevertheless, you proudly exclaim, 'What I feel strongly, I will express with candour.' Then follows a long extract from a Dutch memoir, which you take the trouble to translate for the benefit of the peers of England. Thus, Mirabeau, in his *Lettres à Sophie*, writes to his mistress, 'I am about to pour my soul into thine!' and he transcribes after these words three pages of a French novel! You have aspired, my Lord, to have at least one trait of resemblance to the great orator. But if he permitted himself (and I feel some shame for him) this kind of pleasantry and plagiarism in affairs of love, he would have taken good care not to transport it into the field of politics.'

Whenever the internal affairs of Belgium became embarrassing, or her wise monarch was in difficulty or at fault, he was wont to send for M. Van de Weyer, who was more than once commissioned to arrange a Ministry, and was a leading member in one Ministry (Minister of the Interior) in 1845. On resigning this post, he immediately resumed that which he had already filled during fifteen years and was destined to fill twenty-two years more—the post of Minister Plenipo-

tentiary at the British Court—the one in which he could best watch over the true interests of his country, in which his zeal, spirit, fertility of resource, elevation of character, and sagacity, were most usefully and effectively displayed. One of his highest merits, at least in our eyes, was that he always preferred the alliance of calm disinterested England to that of boasting, grasping, arrogant, encroaching France.<sup>1</sup>

Habitually courteous and conciliatory, he fired up at the semblance of a national slight. On the death of the first Prince Royal of Belgium in 1834, the King was pressed to name a successor, and one of his nephews, a Saxe-Cobourg, was suggested. ‘Never,’ said Talleyrand, ‘will scions of the House of Cobourg be tolerated in Belgium by France.’ ‘Prince,’ replied M. Van de Weyer, ‘this is the first anachronism I ever heard you commit. You fancy yourself still ambassador of Napoleon the Great. Independent Belgium and her King have the incontestable right to choose a successor to the throne.’

The late Lady Holland, along with her many good qualities, could be positive, peremptory, and provoking when it suited her. Shortly after M. Van de Weyer’s arrival in England as Belgian Minister, he was dining with a distinguished party at Holland House, when she suddenly turned to him and asked, ‘How is Leopold?’ ‘Does your Ladyship mean the King of the Belgians?’ ‘I have heard,’ she rejoined, ‘of Flemings, Hainaulters, and Brabanters; but Belgians are new to me.’ His reply was in French, in which the conversation had been partly carried on:

‘*Miladi, avant d’avoir l’honneur de vous être présenté, j’avais entendu souvent parler de vous, non-seulement comme*

<sup>1</sup> Reiterated proof of the designs of France on Belgium may be read in Bulwer’s ‘Life of Lord Palmerston,’ vol. ii. books vii. and ix. The Benedetti intrigue at Berlin was simply the continuation of a traditional policy common to all French governments.

d'une femme de beaucoup d'esprit, mais aussi comme d'une femme qui avait beaucoup lu. Eh bien ! est-il possible que, dans vos nombreuses lectures, vous n'ayez pas rencontré, le livre d'un nommé Jules César—garçon de beaucoup d'esprit—qui, dans ses *Commentaires*, donne à toute notre population le nom de Belges, et ce nom, nous l'avons conservé depuis lui jusqu'à nos jours ?'

She commonly took to those who stood up to her, and he became an established favourite at Holland House.

Although, as a mark of honour, retaining his diplomatic rank, M. Van de Weyer formally withdrew from active service in June 1867, on the hardly admissible plea of advancing age and ill-health. This plea was earnestly contested, not only by his colleagues and friends, but by Leopold II., the present King of the Belgians, who, like Leopold I., the model of a constitutional monarch, is an excellent judge of character and capacity. M. Van de Weyer, however, was proof against all persuasions and remonstrances, which he playfully parried by a reference to a favourite author: '*Le sage, dit La Fontaine, est toujours prêt à partir. — Je veux tâcher d'être sage et tâcher d'être prêt. Or, pour cela, il faut que je puisse consacrer le peu qui me reste de temps à mes affaires particulières.*'

Let us hope that this *peu de temps* includes many years, and that a part of the studious leisure he has thus prudently secured for himself has been employed in completing the collection of his fugitive pieces, the best of which—*Richard Cobden, Roi des Belges*, for example—rival and recall Paul Louis Courier. Two volumes have already appeared under the title of *Choix d'Opuscules*,<sup>1</sup> edited by M. Octave Delepiere,

<sup>1</sup> Choix d'Opuscules philosophiques, historiques, politiques, et littéraires de Sylvain Van de Weyer. Précédés d'avant-propos de l'Editeur. Première et deuxième Séries. Londres, Trübner et Cie. 1863 and 1869.

the learned and highly esteemed Secretary of Legation to the Belgian Embassy.

After mentioning M. Van de Weyer's mission to Portugal in 1836, M. Juste says that the King, in grateful recognition of his services, offered him the title of Count, which was respectfully declined. 'If,' he said, 'there had existed a House of Peers in Belgium, it would have been inexcusable to decline a political position; but, as to a noble designation, he hoped some day or other to have a name, and did not aspire to a title.' When it is remembered with how many memorable events and transactions that name has been honourably associated, there can be no doubt that he judged rightly. His calm confidence in the future is amply vindicated by this biography, and most especially by the period of its publication. Rarely, very rarely, does it come to pass that the entire career of so eminent and active a man can be laid bare before the world in his lifetime—safely, fearlessly, and truthfully—without reticence and without offence.

## ALEXANDER DUMAS.

(FROM THE QUARTERLY REVIEW FOR JULY, 1871.)

1. *Mémoires d'Alexandre Dumas*. Tomes 16.
2. *Mémoires d'Alexandre Dumas*. Deuxième Série. Tomes 8.

BACON never gave stronger proof of his knowledge of mankind than when he left his 'name and memory to foreign nations and the next ages.' A whole host of proverbs might be cited in justification of this bequest; and Lord Russell has felicitously described a proverb as the wisdom of many and the wit of one. 'No man is a prophet in his own country.' 'No man is a hero to his valet de chambre.' 'Familiarity breeds contempt.' What are these but so many variations of the same familiar tune, so many modes of expressing the same universally recognised truth, that it is vain to hope for a just and fair appreciation from our contemporaries. We may be unduly exalted as well as unduly lowered by them, for a brief period or for a set purpose; but that they should hold the scales even, and pronounce impartially on the merits or demerits of a living rival or associate, would seem to border on a moral impossibility. In conversation with James Smith, Crabbe expressed great astonishment at his own popularity in London, adding, 'In my own village they think nothing of me.' If people cannot bring themselves to contemplate as a real genius the quiet unobtrusive character whom they see moving amongst them like any other ordinary mortal, how can they be expected to recognise, as a

duly qualified candidate for the character, one who is mixed up in a succession of literary or party intrigues and contests, who is alternately wounding their prejudices or flattering their self-love, whose fame or notoriety resembles the shuttlecock, which is only kept from falling by being struck from side to side in rivalry.

In England, of late years, political acrimony has been nearly banished from the higher regions of criticism; but an infinity of disturbing forces have been unceasingly at work to prevent the fair estimate of a popular writer in France, and there never was a popular writer who had better reason than Alexander Dumas to protest against the contemporary judgment of his countrymen, or to appeal, like Bacon, to foreign nations and the next ages. This could hardly have been his own opinion when he commenced the publication of his autobiography, which was far from mitigating the spirit of detraction he had provoked; but his death may be accepted as an atonement for his manifold offences; and the most cursory glance at his career will show that its irregularities were indissolubly connected with its brilliancy. It was an adventurous one, in every sense of the term. From its commencement to its close he threw reflection overboard and cast prudence to the winds. He is one of the most remarkable examples of fearless self-reliance, restless activity, and sustained exertion, we ever read or heard of. His resources of all sorts, mental and bodily, proved inexhaustible till six months before his death, although he had been drawing upon them from early youth with reckless prodigality. Amongst his many *tours de force* was the composition of a complete five-act drama within eight days, and the editorship of a daily journal, *Le Mousquetaire*, upon a distinct understanding with his subscribers, faithfully observed, that the contents should be supplied by his pen. It was towards the end of the second

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month of the satisfactory performance of this task that he received the following letter :—

‘ MY DEAR DUMAS,

‘ You have been informed that I have become one of your subscribers (*abonnés*), and you ask my opinion of your journal. I have an opinion of human things : I have none on miracles : you are superhuman. My opinion of you ! It is a note of exclamation ! People have tried to discover perpetual motion. You have done better : you have created perpetual astonishment. Adieu ; live ; in other words, write : I am there to read.

‘ LAMARTINE.

‘ Paris, 20th December, 1853.’

He set up a theatre—*Le Théâtre historique*—for the representation of his own plays, as he set up a journal for his own contributions. He has not written quite as many plays as Lope de Vega, but he has written four times as many romances as the author of ‘Waverley ;’ and he has done quite enough in both walks to confute the theory that a successful dramatist must necessarily fail as a novelist, and *vice versâ*. Postponing for a moment the questions of morality and originality, it can no longer be denied in any quarter that Dumas’ influence, whether for good or evil, has been immense on both sides of the Channel. Indeed, we are by no means sure that his romances have not been more read by the higher class in this country than in his own. Nor, in glancing over his multifarious claims to rank amongst the leading spirits of his age, must we forget his numerous ‘Voyages’ and ‘Impressions de Voyages,’ constituting altogether between twenty and thirty most amusing and instructive volumes of travels. But they are wholly unlike what are commonly called Travels, and constitute an entirely new style of writing. He has a prodigious memory, filled to overflowing with the genuine romance of history : he lights instinctively upon every local tradition that is worth recording :

he has a quick eye for the picturesque and (above all) an exquisite perception of the humorous. He is about the best possible storyteller in print, and he rarely dwells too long on a ludicrous incident, nor forces us to keep company with his laughable characters till they grow wearisome.

The wonder at his unprecedented fertility and versatility had led at one time to a very general belief that most of his publications were concocted by a set of 'prentice hands or journeymen, whom he paid at so much a sheet; and that the utmost he contributed to their handiwork was a masterly touch here and there, and his name on the title-page. One of these, named Macquet, boldly laid claim to a lion's share in the composition of the best, and was strenuously supported by critics of authority.<sup>1</sup> But Macquet was avowedly employed by Dumas for twenty years to hunt up subjects, supply accessories, or do for him what eminent portrait painters are wont to leave to pupils, namely, the preparation of the canvas, the mixing of the colours, the rough outline of the figures, or the drapery. That Macquet was capable of nothing better or higher, was proved by his utter failure as a novelist, whenever, both before and after the alleged partnership, he set up for himself.

A curious attempt was then made to show by calculation that the number of pages which Dumas, according to his own account, must have composed during his literary life, was more than the most practised penman could have copied in the same space of

<sup>1</sup> *Fabrique de Romans: Maison Dumas et Compagnie.* Par Eugène de Mirecourt. Paris, 1845. *Les Supercheries littéraires dévoilées.* Par J. M. Quérard. Troisième Edition. Paris, 1859. Article 'Dumas' (Alexandre Davy). This article, containing 152 pages of close print in double columns, is a collection of all the criticisms and attacks, founded or unfounded, ever levelled against Dumas; and although invaluable as a fund of information, it carries little weight as an authority by reason of its obvious exaggeration and injustice.

time at the rate of sixty pages a day. But as his literary life lasted more than forty years, the required quantity per day is quadrupled or quintupled in this estimate; and the production of twelve or fourteen widely-printed pages, on the average, for a series of years is by no means a physical impossibility. This rate of composition was often exceeded by Sir Walter Scott, who wrote or dictated the 'Bride of Lammermoor' whilst suffering from cramp in the stomach to an extent that often compelled him to break off and throw himself on a sofa to writhe in agony. Lope de Vega is known to have written five full-length dramas in fifteen days, and his dramatic compositions, published or unpublished, have been computed to exceed two thousand.<sup>1</sup> Edgeworth states, in his 'Memoirs,' as an ascertained fact on which heavy bets were laid and won, that a man could run faster with a carriage wheel, which he propelled with the bare hand as a child trundles a hoop, than when he was entirely unencumbered, provided the prescribed distance were sufficient for the *impetus* or adventitious motion thus acquired to tell. This sounds more paradoxical and open to doubt than a statement made in our hearing by Dumas, that, when he warmed to his work, he could supply original matter faster than it could be transcribed by the readiest penman. His mode of life was thus described in the 'Siècle':—

'He rises at six: before him are laid thirty-five sheets of paper of the largest size; he takes up his pen and writes in a hand that M. de Saint-Omer would envy, till eleven. At eleven he breakfasts, always in company: the author of "Monte Christo" is the most hospitable of men of letters: during this meal, in which he plays a good knife and fork, his spirits and his wit never flag. At twelve he resumes the pen, not to quit it again till six in the evening. The dinner finds him what he was in the morning, as lively, as

<sup>1</sup> Ticknor's 'History of Spanish Literature,' vol. ii. p. 204.

light-hearted, as ready at repartee. If by chance he has not filled the allotted number of sheets, a momentary shade passes over his face, he steals away, and returns two or three hours later to enjoy the pleasures of the *soirée*. The year has three hundred and sixty-five days : we have described three hundred and sixty-five days of the famous novelist and dramatist.'

We have now before us (received from Dumas) the original manuscript of a chapter of the '*Mémoires d'un Médecin*,' obviously dashed off at a heat. The handwriting is large, round, and free, bearing a strong resemblance to that of Scott.

The charge of plagiarism is one easily brought, and not easily parried except by showing that there is nothing new under the sun, and that the most inventive minds have not disdained to borrow from their predecessors. Virgil borrowed from Homer : Racine, from Euripides : Corneille (for his *Cid*), from a Spanish dramatist. '*Je prends mon bien où je le trouve*,' was the unabashed avowal of Molière. Shakespeare drew largely on chronicles, popular histories and story-books for his characters and plots : his Greeks and Romans frequently speak the very words placed in their mouth by Plutarch : '*Julius Cæsar*' was preceded by a Latin play on the same subject, and (amongst other things) the famous *Et tu, Brute?* was taken from it.<sup>1</sup> Voltaire sedulously ran down Shakespeare, to throw dust in the eyes of the French public and prevent them from discovering his obligations to the barbarian, as they designated the author of '*Hamlet*.' '*L'Ermite*' in '*Zadig*' is a mere paraphrase of Parnell's poem ; and the fable (Voltaire's) of '*Le Lion et le Marseillais*' is borrowed from Mandeville. The framework and all the solid portions of Mirabeau's best speeches were notoriously supplied by Dumont ; little being left for the orator but to infuse the Promethean fire and vivify the mass.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 11.

We alluded in a preceding essay to note in the handwriting of Talleyrand's brother, to the effect that the only breviary used by the ex-bishop was 'L'Improvisateur français,' a voluminous collection of anecdotes and jests; the fraternal inference being that his conversational brilliancy was partly owing to this repository. Pascal copies whole pages from Montaigne without quoting him. Sheridan confessedly acted on Molière's principle or no-principle: he was indebted to Farquhar for the 'Trip to Scarborough:' the most admired bit of dialogue between Joseph Surface and Lady Teazle is the recast of a fine reflection in 'Zadig';<sup>1</sup> and, consciously or unconsciously, Tom Jones and Blifil must have influenced the conception of Charles and Joseph Surface. 'With regard to the charges about the shipwreck,' wrote Lord Byron to Mr. Murray, 'I think that I told you and Mr. Hobhouse years ago that there was not a single circumstance of it not taken from fact; not, indeed, from any single shipwreck, but all from actual facts of different shipwrecks.' So little was Tasso ashamed of occasional imitations of other poets, or incorporated details from history, that, in his commentary on his 'Rime,' he takes pains to point out all coincidences of the kind.

Scott lays particular stress in his Preface on the fidelity with which he has followed the narratives and traditions on which his romances are almost uniformly based: but he forgot to note that the scene in 'Kenilworth,' where Amy is kneeling before Leicester and asking him about his orders of knighthood, was copied from the 'Egmont' of Goethe. Balzac has appropriated for one of his novels an entire chapter of 'The Disowned.' Lamartine has been tracked to gleaning

<sup>1</sup> 'Astarté est femme; elle laisse parler ses regards avec d'autant plus d'imprudence qu'elle ne se croit pas encore coupable. Malheureusement rassurée sur son innocence, elle néglige les dehors nécessaires. Je tremblerais pour elle tant qu'elle n'aura rien à se reprocher.'—*Zadig*.

grounds, which he hoped to visit incognito, by Sainte-Beuve. Dr. Ferriar has unsparingly exposed the poaching propensities of Sterne, who, besides making free with Rabelais and Burton, has been indirectly the means of dragging more than one author from obscurity by stealing from him. Lord Brougham left a translation of Voltaire's '*Memnon, ou La Sagesse humaine*,' to be published as an original composition of his own; and his executors, entering fully into the spirit of the testator and carrying out his last wishes to the letter, have published it as he left it, without a hint, haply without a suspicion, of its quality.

One of the fine images with which Canning wound up his peroration of the Indemnity Bill of 1818 was certainly anticipated by Madame de Staël.<sup>1</sup> The embryo of Macaulay's '*New Zealander*' has been discovered in Horace Walpole's curious traveller from Lima; and the Theodora of '*Lothair*' bears so strong a resemblance to the Olympia of '*Half a Million of Money*,' as to raise a compromising conviction of identity. But these are trifles. On one of the most solemn and memorable occasions within living memory, in expressing as leader of the House of Commons the national feeling of gratitude and admiration for the hero of a hundred fights, Mr. Disraeli took boldly and bodily without the change of a word, rather more than a third of his prepared oration from the translation of an article in a French review, on the *Memoirs of a French Marshal*, by M. Thiers.

We have been at some pains to illustrate the various shades and degrees of what is commonly called plagiarism; because Dumas has been accused of all of them, from the gravest to the lightest, and needs all the support and sanction that can be derived from example

<sup>1</sup> 'If in the hour of peril the statue of Liberty has been veiled for a moment, let it be confessed in justice that the hands whose painful duty it was to spread that veil, have not been the least prompt to remove it.'

and authority. If we are to put faith in his assailants, he has pushed to extravagance the appropriation doctrine of Molière : he has rivalled not only the broom-maker who stole the materials, but the one who stole his brooms ready made : he has taken entire passages like Mr. Disraeli, complete stories like Voltaire and Lord Brougham : and as for plots, scenes, images, dialogues, if restitution to the original proprietors were enforced, he would be like the daw stripped of its borrowed plumes, or (to borrow a less hackneyed image from Lord Chatham) he would 'stand before the world, like our first parents, naked but not ashamed.' But somehow these charges, though pointedly urged, have utterly failed in their main object : there is no denying the real genius, the genuine originality, of the man after all : and the decisive test is that what he takes assimilates to what he creates, and helps to form an harmonious whole, instead of lying, 'like lumps of marl upon a barren moor, encumbering what they cannot fertilise.' Nor is his one of those puny reputations that must be kept alive by nursing, that cannot bear exposure, that go down at once before a storm. On the contrary, it has almost invariably been confirmed and augmented by the most formidable attacks levelled at him, as a great flame is increased and spread by the wind which blows out a small one.

The autobiography of such a man could not well fail to abound in curious information, lively anecdote, and suggestive reflection ; nor are these Memoirs wanting in merits of a more sterling order. They contain some capital canons of criticism ; and, despite the irrepressible influences of national and personal vanity, they are marked by a pervading spirit of kindly feeling and good sense. If ill-disposed to spare the errors and weaknesses of political adversaries, he is almost always candid and generous towards literary rivals. His highest admiration is reserved for

real genius and true greatness ; although the one may be fallen and the other out of fashion. It is never the reigning dynasty, nor the actual dispensers of favour and fortune, that are the objects of his most enthusiastic praise, but the friends or patrons who sacrificed their prospects to their principles, and lingered in exile, or died poor.

We wish we could add that he has kept himself equally free from interested considerations in his choice of topics and materials ; for it is impossible not to fancy that many of these have been pressed into the service with an exclusive eye to bookmaking. For example, a long chapter is filled with an abstract of Moore's Life of Byron ; and each volume contains episodical narratives of public events which have no peculiar bearing on his life. Still, we should gladly hail his reminiscences as a valuable contribution to the literary and political history of the nineteenth century if we could rely on their general accuracy. But we were startled at the commencement by sundry statements which, assuming them to be true, strikingly illustrate the maxim *le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable* ; and we found more and more, as we proceeded, that which would go far towards justifying the theory of the late Vice-Chancellor Shadwell, who formally laid down from the judgment-seat that writers of fiction are not good witnesses, because they necessarily contract an incurable habit of trusting to their imagination for their facts. On this delicate point, however, our readers may judge for themselves after reading Dumas' account of his birth, parentage, and education.

It were to be wished that the same philosophical indifference touching the distinctions of birth which was exhibited by Sydney Smith,<sup>1</sup> had been manifested

<sup>1</sup> In reference to Lockhart's attempt to make out an irreproachable pedigree for Sir Walter Scott, Sydney Smith said—' When Lady Lans-



by all autobiographers who could not boast of an admitted or clearly established claim to ancestral honours; for an apocryphal progenitor is very far indeed from conciliating respect or favour for his *soi-disant* descendant. After stating that he was born on the 24th July, 1802, at Villers-Cot terets, ‘two hundred paces from the *Rue de la Noue*, where Desmoutiers died, two leagues from Fert -Milon, where Racine was born, and seven leagues from Chateau-Thierry, where La Fontaine first saw the light,’ Dumas proceeds to state that his real hereditary name is not Dumas :—

‘I am one of the men of our epoch whose right has been contested to the greatest number of things. People have even contested my right to my name of Davy de la Pailleterie, to which I attach no great importance, since I have never borne it, and because it will only be found at the end of my name of Dumas in the official acts which I have executed before notaries, or in the documents in which I have figured as principal or witness.’

To prove his title to honourable designation, he prints an exact copy of the register of his birth, from which he undoubtedly appears to be the legitimate offspring of Thomas Alexandre Dumas-Davy de la Pailleterie, General, &c., &c., shown by other references to be the son of the Marquis de la Pailleterie, a French nobleman of ancient family, who, adds his grandson, ‘by I know not what Court quarrel, or what speculative project, was induced, about 1760, to sell his property and domicile himself in St. Domingo.’ It would seem that his expatriation did not last long, for in 1786 we find him settled in Paris, where the following brief dialogue between him and his son, the

downe asked me about my grandfather, I told her he disappeared about the time of the assizes, and we asked no questions.’ This pleasantry, which was afterwards copied by Theodore Hook in one of his novels and has been frequently repeated with variations, was uttered to the present writer in the Athen um Club.

father of the narrator, explains the alleged change of name. The son calls upon the Marquis and announces a sudden resolution. 'What is it?' inquires the Marquis. 'To enlist.' 'As what?' 'As soldier.' 'Where?' 'In the first regiment that comes to hand.' 'As you like,' replied my grandfather; 'but as I am the Marquis de la Pailleterie and Colonel Commissary-General of Artillery, I cannot permit my name to be dragged about in the lowest grades of the army.' 'Then you object to my enlisting?' 'No; but you will enlist under a *nom de guerre*.' 'Nothing can be more just; I will enlist under the name of Dumas.' 'Be it so.' And the Marquis, who had never been the tenderest of fathers, turned his back on his son, leaving him free to do as he chose. 'My father therefore enlisted, as agreed, under the name of Alexandre Dumas.' The Marquis died thirteen days afterwards, but the new recruit never assumed his hereditary name and title—an omission which might fairly warrant a passing doubt of his right to them, were it not for a certificate, signed by four notables of St. Germain en Laye, to the effect that he was by birth a genuine Davy de la Pailleterie.

This weighty question being disposed of, Dumas proceeds to enlarge on the corporal advantages of his father, who, if he answered to the description, must have united the grace and beauty of Antinous to the strength of Hercules :—

'He had the brown complexion, chestnut hair, soft eyes, and straight nose which belong exclusively to the mixture of the Indian and Caucasian races. He had white teeth, sympathetic lips, the neck well set upon powerful shoulders, and notwithstanding his height of five feet nine inches (French), the hand and foot of a woman. His foot in particular was the despair of his mistresses, whose slippers he was rarely unable to wear. *At the epoch of his marriage, his calf was exactly the size of my mother's waist.* His wild

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mode of living in the colonies had developed his address and his strength in an extraordinary manner. He was a regular American cavalier, a Guacho. With gun or pistol, he did wonders of which St. Georges and Junot were jealous. As to his muscular force, it had become proverbial in the army. *More than once, he amused himself in the riding school, whilst passing under a beam, by taking this beam between his arms, and lifting his horse off the ground between his legs.* I have seen him (and I recollect the circumstance with all the excitement of childhood) carry two men upright on his bent leg and hop with them across the room. . . . Dr. Ferus, who served under my father, has frequently related to me that, on the evening of his arrival to join the Army of the Alps, he saw by the fire of a bivouac a soldier who, amongst other feats of strength, was amusing himself by inserting his finger in the barrel of a musket and raising it, not at arm's length, but at finger's length. A man wrapped in a cloak mixed with the spectators and looked on like the rest, till smiling and throwing off his cloak, he said, "Not bad that; now bring me four muskets." They obeyed, for they had recognised the General-in-Chief. He then inserted his four fingers in the four barrels, and lifted the four muskets with the same ease with which the soldier had lifted one. Ferus, when he told me this anecdote, was still at a loss to comprehend how a man's muscles could raise such a weight.'

We are as much at a loss as the Doctor; but further marvels are to come :—

'During one of the General's Italian campaigns, the soldiers were forbidden to leave the camp without their side-arms under pain of forty-eight hours' arrest. My father was passing on horseback, when he met Père Moulin, since *maître d'hôtel* at the Palais-Royal, who, at this period, was a tall and fine young man of twenty-five. Unluckily this tall and fine young man had no sword by his side. On seeing my father he set off on a run to gain a cross street; but my father, who had caught sight of the fugitive and guessed the cause of his flight, put his horse to the gallop, overtook him, and exclaiming, "So, rascal, you are resolved to get yourself assassinated;" collared him, and lifting him from the ground,

without pressing or slackening the pace of his horse, my father carried the man thus in his talons as a hawk carries a lark, till, finding a *corps de garde* on his way, he threw Moulin towards them, exclaiming, "Forty-eight hours' arrest for that ——."

The following incident may serve to convey a notion of the manner in which the General's personal prowess was exhibited against the enemy in the field :—

'It was at Mauldi that my father found the first opportunity of distinguishing himself. Commanding as brigadier a look-out party composed of four dragoons, he unexpectedly fell in with an enemy's patrol composed of thirteen Tyrolese chasseurs and a corporal. To see and, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, charge them, was the affair of an instant. The Tyrolese, who did not expect this sudden attack, retreated into a small meadow surrounded by a ditch wide enough to stop cavalry. But, as I have already observed, my father was an excellent horseman ; and he was on an excellent horse, called Joseph. He gathered up the reins, gave Joseph his head, cleared the ditch like M. de Montmorency, and found himself in an instant in the midst of the thirteen chasseurs, who, stupified by such hardihood, presented their arms and surrendered. The conqueror collected the thirteen rifles into a single bundle, placed them on his saddle-bow, compelled the thirteen men to move up to his four dragoons, who remained on the other side of the ditch which they had been unable to clear, and having repassed the ditch the last man, he brought his prisoners to head-quarters. Prisoners were rare at this time. The appearance of four men bringing in thirteen produced a lively sensation in the camp.'

This we can well believe, and we know of no parallel for the exploit except that of the Irishman, who, single-handed, took four Frenchmen prisoners by surrounding them ; or that of Sir Frizzle Pumpkin, to whom a squadron of cavalry surrendered at discretion on his coming suddenly upon them in a woody defile when he was consulting his personal safety by flight.

If an English writer were to begin in this fashion,

his countrymen would most assuredly set him down for a rival of Munchausen, and haply hold themselves excused from attaching any serious importance to his future revelations, real or pretended. But in the case of a vivacious Frenchman, ample allowance must be made for a national habit which we would rather exemplify by instances than characterise in plain language.

If M. Lamartine occasionally laid himself open to censure by indiscretion, he rendered invaluable services to the cause of peace and order by his courage and presence of mind at an extremely critical period in 1848 ; and the praise of high-minded and unswerving integrity has been unanimously conceded to him. It is impossible to suspect such a man of wilful or conscious departure from veracity, and we may therefore cite the Waterloo chapter of his ' History of the Restoration ' as one of the most remarkable examples on record of the predominance of imagination over judgment in a Frenchman.<sup>1</sup> M. Thiers's account of the battle of Trafalgar is substantially as much at variance with both fact and probability, though not quite so extravagant on the face of it, as M. Lamartine's ' Waterloo.' The extraordinary fictions to which French ministers and generals habitually resorted during the late war to keep up the spirits of the people and the troops, must be fresh in the recollection of our readers. There was not a pin to choose between the expiring Empire, the government of National Defence, or the government of the National Assembly, in this respect. No sooner had M. Thiers got together the semblance of an army, than he declared it to be the finest army ever possessed by France ; and when, after several days of desultory street fighting, he had worn out rather than conquered the armed rabble of the capital, he proclaimed that the whole world was lost in admiration at the splendour

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, p. 38.

of his victory and the irresistible prowess of French troops.

If we recall attention to this national weakness, it is simply for the purpose of suggesting that we cannot throw aside Dumas as unworthy of further notice by reason of his tendency to exaggeration, without laying down a rule which must prove fatal to the reputation of the most distinguished of his countrymen. Fortunately, too, the value of his 'Memoirs' consists principally in anecdotes and revelations which may be easily verified by accessible evidence, or in views, reflections, and criticisms based upon patent and acknowledged facts. With regard to the alleged events of his boyhood, we are inclined to assume his general accuracy, because we are utterly at a loss to see what motive he could have in inventing or colouring stories, most of which are by no means flattering to his self-love. He frankly tells us that he was bred up in poverty in a petty provincial town by a doting mother, whose fondness, we must do him the justice to add, he uniformly repays by the most affectionate and unremitting solicitude for her feelings and comforts. Indeed, the endearing and ennobling sentiment of filial love breathes throughout the whole of his family details as freshly and naturally as in Moore's Diary, thereby affording another striking proof that real goodness of heart may co-exist with a more than ordinary degree of vanity and self-consciousness, even when pampered by flattery and inflated by success.

Dumas's master-passion from boyhood was the chase, or, more correctly speaking, *la chasse*, which means something widely different from the corresponding word in English. One of the first official notices that meets the eye on the wooden pier or landing-place at Calais is, '*Il est défendu de chasser sur le ponts,*' a puzzling intimation to sportsmen who are not aware that almost everything that runs or flies is the legiti-

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mate object of *la chasse* in France. All is game that comes to the Gallic sportsman's bag. He does not despise a tomtit or yellow-hammer; he regards a thrush as a prize, and he ruthlessly exults over the broken wing of a cock-robin or *rouge-gorge*. The Calais notice is especially addressed to sportsmen in pursuit of mud-larks. One of the most amusing stories composed or stolen (the fact is disputed) by Dumas, is 'La Chasse au Chastre,' in which he depicts the trials and perils into which a worthy professor of music is hurried by the reckless pursuit of a field-fare. He best can paint it who has felt it most and Dumas is confessedly the chronicler of his own sensations in this book. Although he rose in time to the dignity of a regular poacher, and made unlawful prize of any stray hare or partridge that came within range, he dwells with unrestrained rapture upon the delights of the day when a friendly neighbour gave him leave to shoot larks upon a strictly preserved common. We also learn from his lively sketch of his first visit to Paris, that he undertook it in well-founded reliance on his skill as a sportsman for supplying the ways and means of the expedition. It was in 1822, when he was in his twentieth year, that this expedition was thus conceived and arranged in the course of a walk with a friend, a notary's clerk like himself.

"Ah," I exclaimed, "an idea!" "What is it?"—"Let us go and spend three days at Paris." "And your office?"—"M. Lefevre (his master) himself starts for Paris to-morrow. He commonly stays away two or three days; in two or three days we shall be back." Paillot felt in his pockets, and pulled out twenty-eight francs. "Behold," said he, "all I possess! And you?"—"I have seven francs." "Twenty-eight and seven make thirty-five. How do you suppose we are to reach Paris with that? There is thirty francs for coach hire to begin."—"Stop a minute, I have a way." "What?"—"You have a horse?" "Yes." "We pack our clothes in a portmanteau, we take our shooting-jackets

and our guns, and we shoot as we go; we eat our game on the journey, and we spend nothing." "How is that to be managed?"—"Nothing easier: between this and Dammartin, for example, we shall kill a hare, two partridges, and a quail." "I hope we shall kill more than that."—"And so do I, but I take the lowest estimate. We arrive at Dammartin; we dress and eat our hare; we pay our wine, our bread, and our salt with the two partridges, and we give the quail to the waiter. We have nothing then to provide for but your horse, which may be well done for three francs a day."

"But we have only one gun?"—"It is all we want; one of us will shoot, the other will follow on horseback. In this manner, it being sixteen leagues to Paris, we shall have only eight leagues each." "And the game-keepers?"—"Ah, a precious obstacle! The one of us who is on horseback descries them at a distance; he gives due warning to the one who is shooting. The horseman dismounts, the sportsman mounts and gallops off the beat. As for the dismounted horseman, the keeper overtakes him, and finds him strolling along with his hands in his pockets. 'What are you doing here?'—'I! you see what I am doing.' 'Never mind, let us hear.'—'I am taking a walk.' 'Just now you were on horseback.'—'Well, is it contrary to law to take a walk after a ride?' 'No, but you were not alone.'—'That may be.' 'Your companion was shooting.'—'You don't say so.' 'He is down there on horseback with his gun.'—'If so, run after him and try to catch him.' 'But I can't run after him and catch him, since he is on horseback and I am on foot.'—'In this case, my friend, your better course would be to go to the first village and drink our health.' Whereupon we—you or I—give him a franc, which is set down to our account of profit and loss; the keeper makes his bow, and we continue our journey." "Well, well," exclaimed Paillot, "that is not badly imagined. I had heard that you had tried your hand at play-writing." "It is precisely to see Leuven on the subject of my attempts in this line that I wish to go to Paris." "Well, once at Paris——"

The scheme was forthwith put in practice. They started the same evening for Paris, where they arrived the night following, with four hares, twelve partridges,



and two quails, for which the landlord of an hotel in the Rue des Vieux Augustins agrees to lodge and board them for two days and present them with a pâté and a bottle of wine at parting. Dumas's grand object was to see Talma, and his first visit is to a literary friend, who introduces him to the great actor at his toilette :—

‘ Talma was very shortsighted. I do not know whether he saw me or not. He was washing his chest. His beard was nearly all shaved, which particularly struck me, inso-much as I had heard a dozen times that in *Hamlet* at the appearance of the father's ghost, Talma's hair was seen to stand on end. It must be owned that the aspect of Talma under these circumstances was far from poetical. However, when he stood upright, when, with the upper part of the body uncovered and the lower part enveloped in a kind of large mantle of white cloth, he took one of the ends of this mantle and drew it on his shoulder, so as to half-veil the breast; there was something imperial in the movement that made me tremble. Leuven explained the object of our call. Talma took up a kind of ancient stylus, at the end of which was a pen, and signed us an entrance ticket for two.’

What follows is characteristic. *Virgilium tantum vidi*; and our autobiographer cannot trust his readers to complete the natural train of association, but must fain suggest that the first meeting between the great actor and the great dramatist is not to be passed over as an every-day occurrence :—

‘ He held out his hand to me. I longed to kiss it. With my dramatic notions, Talma was a god for me; an unknown god, it is true—unknown as Jupiter was to Sémelé—but a god who appeared to me in the morning, and was to reveal himself to me at eve. Our hands touched. Oh, Talma, if you then had had twenty years less, or I twenty years more! All the honour was for me, Talma. I knew the past; you could not divine the future. If you had been told, Talma, that the hand you had just clasped would write sixty or eighty dramas, in each of which you, who were looking out for parts all your life, would have found a part that you

would have converted into a marvel, you would hardly have parted so easily with the poor young man who coloured up to the eyes at seeing you, and was proud of having touched your hand. But how could you have seen this in me, Talma, since I did not see it in myself ?'

An odd ebullition of the same sort once exposed him to a clever rebuke, attributed to Madame Dejazet. Arriving together on a theatrical expedition at Rouen, they were requested by the police to state their respective professions. '*Moi,*' said Dumas '*si je n'étais pas dans la ville ou fut né le grand Corneille, je me nommerais auteur dramatique.*' '*Et moi,*' said Dejazet, '*si je n'étais pas dans la ville où fut brûlée Jeanne d'Arc, je me nommerais pucelle.*' His son, the author of '*La Dame aux Camélias,*' in reference to his complexion and his vanity, said of him: 'My father is capable of getting up behind his own carriage to make people believe that he has a man of colour for footman.' Dumas begins one of his chapters thus:—'I know not who—*perhaps myself*—has said that the Revolution of 1830 was the last shot of Waterloo. *It is a great truth.*' Yet the graceful and truthful apology which Lord Russell has made for Moore's vanity may be made with equal justice for that of Dumas. It is a frank, joyous, and cordial vanity, without the slightest tincture of envy; and, far from seeking to depreciate his distinguished contemporaries, his proudest boast is that he has fairly earned a right to be named along with them:—

'At the epoch of my arrival in Paris (1822), the men who held a rank in literature, the illustrious amongst whom I came to claim a place, were Chateaubriand, Jouy, Lemercier, Arnault, Étienne, Baour-Lormian, Béranger, C. Nodier, Viennet, Scribe, Théaulon, Soumet, Casimir Delavigne, Lucien Arnault, Ancelot, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Desaugiers, and Alfred de Vigny. Let it be well understood that, by the order I assign them, I am only naming not classify-

ing them. Then came the half-literary, half-political, as Cousin, Salvandy, Villemain, Thiers, Augustine Thierry, Michelet, Mignet, Vitet, Cavé, Mérimée, and Guizot. Lastly, those, who, not being yet known, were to produce themselves by degrees, such as Balzac, Soulié, De Musset, Sainte-Beuve, Auguste Barbier, Alphonse Karr, Théophile Gautier. The women in vogue, all three poets, were Mesdames Desbordes-Valmore, Amable Tastu, and Delphine Gay. Madame Sand, still unknown, was to be first revealed by "Indiana," in 1828 or 1829.

'I believe I have known all this Pleiad, which has supplied the world of ideas and poetry for more than half a century, some as friends and supporters, the others as enemies and adversaries. The good the former have done me, the evil the latter have attempted to do me, will in no respect influence the judgments I shall pass upon them. The first, by pushing me on, have not caused me to make a step the more; the second, by trying to stop me, have not caused me to make a step the less. Across the friendships, the hates, the envies—in the midst of an existence harassed in its details, but always calm and serene in its progression—I have reached the place that God had marked out for me; I have reached it without intrigue, without coterie, and never elevating myself but by mounting on my own works. Arrived where I am, namely, at the summit which every man finds at the half-way point of life, I ask for nothing, wish for nothing. I envy nobody. I have many friendships. I have not a single enmity. If, at my starting-point, God had said to me, "Young man, what do you desire?" I should not have dared to ask from his omnipotent greatness that which he has been graciously pleased to grant me in his paternal goodness. I shall say then of these men whom I have named, so soon as I meet them on my road, all that there may be to say of them; if I hide anything, it will be the ill. Why should I be unjust towards them? There is not amongst them a glory or a fortune for which I have ever wished to change my reputation or my purse.

'Yesterday I read upon one of the stones of a house I had had built for myself, and which, whilst waiting for me—me or another—has hitherto lodged only sparrows and swallows—these words, written by an unknown hand: "*O Dumas! tu n'as pas su jouir, et pourtant tu regretteras.*"—E. L.

I wrote under, "*Niais ! si tu es un homme. Mentreuse ! si tu es une femme.*" A. D.—But I took good care not to efface the inscription.'

It is difficult to avoid sympathising with a man of genius who pours forth his soul in this fashion, and the egotism may be pardoned for the sake of the frankness and generosity of the burst. Neither, looking at the peculiar character of the writer, do we deem it clear that he formed an erroneous theory of what is called success in life, or that he had much reason to envy the majority of those who, according to their own or the popular estimate, may have made a better use of their opportunities. Every reflecting person must be the best judge of what is necessary to his (or her) happiness, and Dumas needed constant agitation and excitement, as well as notoriety. A fixed station, a defined rank, nay, even an established fortune, would have become irksome, fretting, and galling incumbrances when the flush of novelty had passed away. He would have felt like Manon Lescaut, when she declared the conventional restraints of constancy and propriety insufferable; when

'Virtue she found too painful an endeavour,  
Condemned to live in decencies for ever;'

or like the opium-eater when he was put upon the short allowance of fifty or sixty drops of laudanum per day; or like Henry Beyle (Stendhal), who, settled in a comfortable consulship, exclaims, 'How many cold characters, how many geometricians, would be happy, or at least tranquil and satisfied, in my place! But my soul is a fire which dies out if it does not flame up.'

It was the remark of an astute man of the world, that if he could choose and portion out a new life, he would be a handsome woman till thirty, a victorious general from thirty to fifty, and a cardinal (i. e. a cardinal of the olden time) in his old age. A Frenchman

of the Restoration and the July Monarchy might have hesitated between being a victorious general or an author in renown. 'Bear in mind,' wrote Jules Janin, in 1839, 'that it is now the poets, the novelists, the dramatists, the journalists in renown, that have the titles, the coat-armour, the coronets. It is they that people press forward to gaze upon when they enter a room; it is they whose name the very lacquey pronounces with pride when he announces them. Let a Créqui and M. de Chateaubriand enter at the same time, and you will see on which side all heads and all hearts will incline first. Announce M. le Duc de Montmorency and M. de Balzac, and everybody will look first at M. de Balzac.' Under similar circumstances all eyes would have been turned towards Alexandre Dumas; and when we reflect that what the majority of the world are striving for is to be distinguished amongst their fellows—*quod monstrer digito prætereuntium*—there is little room for surprise that he should have found ample compensation for all his labours and all his trials in his fame.

We left him exulting in the hope of seeing Talma act, and for once the reality did not fall short of the expectation. The play was 'Sylla,' one great attraction of which consisted in the analogy in the hero's fortunes, as depicted by the author of the piece, to those of Napoleon I. After the performance, Dumas was taken to see Talma in his dressing-room, which he found crowded with notabilities:—

'Talma caught sight of me near the door. "Ah, ah," he said, "come forward." I advanced two steps nearer. "Well, Mr. Poet," he continued, "are you satisfied?"—"Better than that, I am lost in wonder." "Well, you must come and see me again, and ask me for more tickets."—"Alas, I leave Paris to-morrow, or the day after at latest." "That's unlucky, you would have seen me in *Regulus*. You know that I have made them fix *Regulus* for the day after to-morrow, Lucien

(Arnault, the author)?"—"Yes, I thank you," said Lucien. "What, you cannot stay till the day after to-morrow?"—"Impossible, I must return to the country." "What is your employment in the country?"—"I dare not tell you. I am clerk to a notary." "Bah," said Talma, "you must not despair on that account. Corneille was clerk to a procureur. Gentlemen, I present a future Corneille!" I coloured to the eyes. "Touch my forehead," I said, "it will bring me luck." Talma placed his hand upon my head. "Come then," said he, "so be it. Alexandre Dumas, I baptize thee poet in the name of Shakespeare, Corneille, and Schiller! Return to the country; resume your place in your office, and if thou hast verily the vocation, the angel of poetry will take care to find thee wherever thou art, to carry thee off by the hair of the head like the prophet Habakkuk, and to carry thee where thou hast work to do." I seized his hand, which I tried to carry to my lips. "*Allons, allons,*" he exclaimed, "this lad has enthusiasm; we shall make something of him," and he shook me cordially by the hand.

So ended this memorable interview, and Dumas returns to his province and his desk in a very bad mood for copying deeds or serving processes. His master probably saw that the embryo poet was likely to make a bad clerk; for Dumas immediately received warning that his future services would not be needed, and he forthwith set about the requisite preparations for the definite transfer of his household gods to the capital. The want of money was the grand difficulty. He owed 150 francs to his tailor, and all his available assets consisted of a dog named Pyramus, famous for voracity. This is not the precise quality which commends or adds value to an animal of the canine species, yet it proved the salvation of Dumas. His dog had left him to follow a butcher loaded with half a sheep, and he was in the very act of vainly endeavouring to parry the demands of the tailor, when he was informed that an Englishman requested the honour of his company at a neighbouring inn. On repairing thither, he finds a man, 'from forty to forty-five years of age,

of a reddish fair complexion, with hair like a brush, and whiskers shaped like a collar, dressed in a blue coat with metal buttons, a shamois waistcoat, and grey kerseymere breeches, with gaiters to match, such as are worn by grooms. He was seated before a table on which he had just been dining, and which exhibited the remains of a dinner for six. He might weigh from three hundred to three hundred and sixty pounds.' Seated near him, with a depressed look, was Pyramus; and around Pyramus lay ten or a dozen plates, cleaned with that neatness which characterised him in respect to dirty plates. On one, however, lay some unfinished morsels. It was evidently these that caused the depression of Pyramus. '*Venez parler à modé, Monsieur,*' said the Englishman; '*Le Dog a vos, il plait à moa.*'" From a dialogue thus commenced and carried on in the same dialect by the stranger, we learn that the dog's power of eating had won his heart. '*Je aimé, moa,*' he exclaims, '*les animals et les gens qui mangé beaucoup; c'est qu'il ont un bon estomac, et le bon estomac il faisé le bon humour.*'

Our sagacious compatriot, it will be observed, differed slightly from Lord Byron, who envies and commends the gifted mortals who have a bad heart and a good stomach, who feel little and digest well. But so much the better for Dumas, who, after a hard internal struggle with his conscience which is hushed by an opportune reminiscence of the dun, agrees to part with his four-footed friend for the moderate sum of five napoleons, only a third of the price which the fat Englishman was anxious to force upon him.

This anecdote is an apt illustration of the manner in which Dumas and other popular French authors perseveringly foster the prejudices of their countrymen. The fat and fair Englishman, with his broken French and ridiculous eccentricity, still keeps his place in their light literature and on their stage; although nearly

half a century has elapsed since we, on this side of the Channel, ceased to believe in brown and lean marquises living on frogs and *soupe maigre*, taking enormous quantities of snuff, wearing collars or shirt fronts for want of shirts, and gaining a scanty livelihood as fiddlers or dancing-masters. A still longer period has elapsed since we tolerated, even in a Fielding or a Smollett, the coarseness of expression which has little, if at all, lessened the popularity or impeded the circulation of 'Paul de Kock,' although the more fastidious portion of the Parisian public may disdainfully set down his works as '*la lecture des grisettes*.' These very memoirs are occasionally defaced by expressions and allusions for which it would be difficult to find a parallel in any respectable English publication of later date than the editions of Pope containing the Poisoning and the Circumcision of Edmund Curll.

Relieved from difficulty by his dog, like Whittington by his cat, our hero is preparing to start for Paris. The five napoleons having been reduced one-half by a payment on account to the tailor, he hits upon an ingenious expedient for defraying the expenses of his journey. He plays billiards with the bookkeeper of the *diligence* for a *petit verre d'absinthe* a game, and leaves off the winner of 600 glasses, which, at three sous each, make a total gain of ninety francs, enough to pay for twelve places to Paris. He satisfies himself with one, arrives on the scene of his future glory with his fifty francs untouched, and proceeds to look round for a protector amongst the old friends of his father on the strength of his name. He is coldly received by Marshal Gourdain, and narrates as follows the result of his visit to Marshal (then General) Sebastiani:—

'The General was in his cabinet; at the four corners of this cabinet were four secretaries, as at the four corners of our almanack are the four points of the compass or the four winds. These four secretaries were writing to his dictation.



It was three less than Cæsar, but two more than Napoleon. Each of these secretaries had on his desk—besides his pen, his paper, and his penknife—a gold snuff-box which he presented oped to the General, each time that the latter stopped before him. The General delicately introduced the forefinger and thumb of a hand that his half-cousin Napoleon would have envied for its whiteness, voluptuously inhaled the scent, and then resumed his walk. My visit was short. Whatever my consideration for the General, I felt little disposed to become a snuff-box bearer.'

He is coolly bowed out by another military friend of his father, and calls, as a last resource, on General Foy, to whom he has fortunately the additional recommendation of being the friend and protégé of one of the General's most influential constituents. His reception was favourable, and the following colloquy takes place:—

"I must first know what you are good for."—"Oh, not much." "Of course you know a little mathematics?"—"No, General." "You have at least some notions of algebra, of geometry, of physics?" He paused between each word, and at each word I felt myself colouring more and more. It was the first time that I was placed face to face with my ignorance.—"No, General," I replied, stammering, "I know none of these." "You have gone through your law course, at all events?"—"No, General." "You know Latin and Greek?"—"Latin, a little; Greek, not a word." "Do you speak any living language?"—"Italian." "Do you understand accounts?"—"Not at all." I was in torture, and he suffered visibly on my account. . . . "And yet," he resumed, "I am unwilling to abandon you."—"No, General, for you would not abandon me only. I am a dunce, an idler, it is true; but my mother, who reckons upon me, whom I have promised to find a place,—my mother ought not to be punished for my ignorance and my idleness." "Give me your address," said the General, "I will consider what can be made of you. There, at this desk." He offered me the pen with which he had been writing. I took it, I looked at it, wet as it still was; then, shaking my head, I returned it to him.—"No, General," I said, "I will not write with your

pen; it would be a profanation." He smiled. "What a child you are," he continued. "Here then is a new one." I began to write, with the General looking on. Hardly had I written my name than he clapped his hands. "We are saved," he exclaimed, "you write a good hand." My head dropped upon my breast—I had no longer strength to bear up against my shame. A good handwriting: this was the sum total of my qualifications. This brevet of incapacity, oh! it was mine beyond dispute.'

This brevet of incapacity, however, has been possessed by a large majority of the most illustrious men of all ages, and it is only within the century that persons of superior education have deemed themselves licensed to indulge in an inconvenient and selfish degree of negligence in this respect. It will appear from any good collection of autographs that, if our ancestors were deficient in orthography, they were proficient in caligraphy, and that they became comparatively careless as to their penmanship about the time when they began to pay strict attention to their spelling. In particular, they invariably made a point of signing their names clearly and distinctly, in marked contrast to the modern fashion, which often renders it impossible to do more than guess at the identity of a correspondent. In the round-robin addressed to Dr. Johnson on the subject of Goldsmith's epitaph (a facsimile of which is given by Boswell), the names of the most distinguished malcontents—Gibbon, Burke, Sheridan, Colman, Joseph Warton, Reynolds, &c.—although affixed at the dinner-table, bear no marks of haste or slovenliness; and amongst the French authors of the eighteenth century, the two most remarkable for the excellence of their handwriting were Voltaire and Rousseau.

The press of public business may be alleged as some excuse for statesmen; whilst the hurry and flutter of composition may account for the bad writing of poets and authors of the imaginative class. When Napoleon

first attained power, his signature was of the orthodox length and character; it gradually shrank to the three first letters (Nap.); and later in his career it consisted of a dash or scrawl intended for an N. Byron latterly wrote a sad scrawl. Yet against these great names may be placed Washington, Wellington, Pitt, Fox, Canning, Peel, Moore, Rogers, Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and a host of famous contemporaries, whose example, we hope, will save both 'young France' and 'young England' from the mischievous error of ever again regarding an eminently useful and becoming accomplishment as a 'brevet of incapacity.'

On the strength of his handwriting, Dumas is received into the establishment of the Duke of Orleans (afterwards King of the French) as a clerk at sixty pounds a year, and is singularly fortunate in finding amongst his companions of the desks one duly qualified to give him some excellent advice as to his literary projects. We shall quote the best of it, the rather that we suspect Dumas of having placed the results of his own studies and experience in the mouth of his friend:

"Whom then ought one to imitate in comedy, tragedy, the drama?" "In the first place, you ought not to imitate at all: you must study. He who follows a guide must necessarily walk behind. Do you wish to walk behind?"—"No." "Then study. Write neither comedy, nor tragedy, nor drama; take the passions, the events, the characters; melt them all together in the mould of your imagination, and make statues of Corinthian brass." "What is Corinthian brass?" "You do not know?"—"I know nothing." "You are lucky." "In what respect?" "Because you will learn all by yourself; because you will undergo no levelling process but that of your own intelligence, no rule but that of your own capacity for instruction. Corinthian brass? You must have heard that once upon a time Mummius burned Corinth. If so, you may have read that from the heat of the conflagration, gold, silver, and brass had been melted and ran in streams through the streets. Now, the mixture of these

three metals, the most precious of all, formed a compound metal, which was called Corinthian brass. Well, he who shall effect, by his genius, for comedy, tragedy, and the drama, that which, unconsciously, in his ignorance, in his barbarism, Mummius did for gold, silver, and bronze,—he who shall melt by the fire of inspiration, and melt in a single mould, Æschylus, Shakspeare, and Molière,—he, my friend, will have discovered a brass as precious as the brass of Corinth."

"I reflected a moment on what Lapagne had said. "What you tell me," I replied, "is very fine; and as it is fine it ought to be true." "Are you acquainted with Æschylus?"—"No." "Shakspeare?"—"No." "Molière?"—"Hardly." "Well then, read all that these three have written; when you have read them, read them a second time; when you have read them a second time, learn them by heart—and then—oh, then, you will pass from them to those who proceed from them—from Æschylus to Sophocles, from Sophocles to Euripides, from Euripides to Seneca, from Seneca to Racine, from Racine to Voltaire, and from Voltaire to Chénier. So much for tragedy. Thus, you will be present at this transformation of a race of eagles, ending in parrots."

"And to whom shall I pass from Shakspeare?"—"From Shakspeare to Schiller." "And from Schiller?"—"To nobody."—"But Ducis?"—"Oh, don't let us confound Schiller with Ducis: Schiller draws inspiration, Ducis imitates; Schiller remains original: Ducis becomes a copyist, and a bad copyist."

"Now for Molière?"—"As to Molière, if you wish to study something worth the trouble, instead of descending, you will ascend from Molière to Terence, from Terence to Plautus, from Plautus to Aristophanes."

"But Corneille, you have forgotten him, I fancy?"—"I do not forget him, I place him by himself, because he is neither an ancient Greek, nor an old Roman. He is a Cordovan, like Lucan; you will see, when you compare them, that his verse has a great resemblance to that of the 'Pharsalia.'"

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"And in romance, what is to be done?"—"Everything, as with the theatre." "I believed, however, that we had excellent romances." "What have you read in this line?"—"Those of Lesage, of Madame Cottin, and of Pigault-

Lebrun." "What was their effect on you?"—"Those of Lesage amused me, those of Madame Cottin made me shed tears, those of Pigault-Lebrun made me laugh." "Then you have read neither Goethe, nor Walter Scott, nor Cooper? Read them."

"And when I have read them, what am I to make of them?"—"Corinthian brass, as before; only you must endeavour to add a trifling ingredient which is to be found in neither one of them—passion. Goethe will give you poetry, Walter Scott the study of character, Cooper the mysterious grandeur of the prairie, the forest, and the ocean; but as for passion, you will seek for it in vain in either of them."

As an indispensable preparation for the historical romance, he is told to read Joinville, Froissart, Monstrelet, Chatelain, Juvénal des Ursins, Montluc, Saulex-Tavannes, l'Estoile, De Retz, Saint-Simon, Villars, Madame de la Fayette, Richelieu; and he then begs to have a course of poetic reading marked out for him.

"In the first place, what have you read?"—"Voltaire, Parny, Bertin, Demoustier, Legouv  , Colardeau." "Good. Forget the whole of them. Read, in antiquity, amongst the Romans, Virgil; in the middle age, Dante. It is living marrow that I am now prescribing for you." "And amongst the moderns?"—"Ronsard, Mathurin, Regnier, Milton, Goethe, Uhland, Byron, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, and, above all, a little volume about to appear entitled 'Andr   Ch  nier.'"

Dumas's first publication was a volume containing three novels, entitled 'Nouvelles Contemporaines.' He sold four copies, neither more nor less, and having contributed 300 francs (borrowed money) towards the printing, began to turn over in his mind the suggestions of an intelligent publisher: 'Make yourself a name and I will print for you'—

'There (he continues) was the entire question. Make yourself a name. This is the condition imposed on every man who ever made himself one. This is the condition which at the moment when it was imposed on him, he has

asked himself despairingly how he was to fulfil. And yet he has fulfilled it. I am no believer in unknown talent, in undiscovered genius. There were reasons for the suicide of Escousse and Lebras. It is a hard thing to say—but neither one nor the other of these two poor madmen, if he had lived, would have had at the end of twenty years of work the reputation which the epitaph of Béranger conferred upon them.' I therefore seriously set about making myself a name, to sell my books and not print them again at half profits.'

It was as dramatist that he was resolved to make the desiderated name; and the time was singularly opportune, for the innovating and vivifying influences which had transformed and elevated the literature of the Restoration were on the point of extending to the stage,—that stage which had survived the monarchy, survived the republic, survived the first empire, and might have survived the second but for the united and co-operating energies of two master spirits, of whom Dumas took the lead. 'Well, M. de Fontanes, have you found me a poet?' was the habitual demand of the would-be Augustus every time he met his improvised Mæcenas. The answer was uniformly in the negative: poetry could not be made to order; poets would not be forthcoming, like armed legions, at the stamp of the iron heel of a despot. Yet they began to crop up abundantly as soon as they were allowed to breathe freely:

'Their names gave present promise of the immense reverberation they were to produce in the future. Lamartine, Hugo, De Vigny, Sainte-Beuve, Méry, Scribe, Barbier, Alfred de Musset, Balzac—these fed with their sap or rather with their blood that large and unique spring of

<sup>1</sup> Escousse and Lebras were two young men who, on the failure of a small piece at a minor theatre, shut themselves up in a garret with a pan of charcoal and suffocated themselves. Escousse left in prose and verse pathetic appeals to the press to do justice to his memory, and especially to state that 'Escousse killed himself because he felt his place was not here, because the love of glory did not sufficiently animate his soul, *if he had a soul.*'

poetry at which the whole nineteenth century, France, Europe, the universe, were to drink. But the movement was not only in this Pleiad: an entire soldiery was engaged, co-operating in a general work by particular attacks: it was who should batter the old poetry in breach. Dittmer and Cavé published the "*Soirées de Neuilly*;" Vitot, the "*Barricades*" and the "*États de Blois*;" Mérimée the "*Théâtre de Clara Gazul*." And observe well that all this was beside the theatre, beside the acting drama, beside the real struggle. The real struggle, it was myself and Hugo—I am speaking chronologically—who were about to engage in it.'

This claim is recognized and confirmed by Sir Henry Bulwer (Lord Dalling), writing in the height of the contest between the Classicists and Romanticists, intimately acquainted with both schools and fully imbued with the spirit of the period:

'This (the age of Louis Quatorze) was a great period of the human mind, and, from this period to our own, tragedy has taken but one giant stride. The genius which governed the theatre stood unappalled, when the genius that had founded the throne lay prostrate. The reign of Robespierre did not disturb the rule of Racine. The republican Chénier, erect and firm before the tyranny of Bonaparte, bowed before the tyranny of the Academy. The translations of Ducis were a homage to the genius of Shakspeare but no change in the dramatic art. In M. Delavigne you see the old school modernised, but it is the old school. I pass by M. de Vigny, who has written "*La Maréchale d'Ancre*:" I pass by M. Soulier, who has wrtten "*Clotilde*:" I pass by the followers to arrive at the chiefs of the new drama, M. Victor Hugo and M. Alexandre Dumas.'

The bare definition of the rival schools went far in popular opinion to decide the merits of the controversy. 'Romanticism,' says Beyle, 'is the art of presenting a people with the literary works which, in the actual condition of their habits and modes of faith, are capable of

<sup>1</sup> 'France, Social, Literary, Political.' By Henry Lytton Bulwer, Esq., M.P. In two volumes. London, 1834.

affording them the greatest possible amount of pleasure. Classicism, on the contrary, presents them with the literature which afforded the greatest possible amount of pleasure to their great-grandfathers.' It was a clear gain to the dramatist to be emancipated from the rigid observance of the unities, to be free to choose subjects from modern history or the ordinary walks of life, to drape them appropriately and make them talk naturally, instead of being tied down to Greek and Roman models, or rather what passed for Greek and Roman amongst the courtiers of the Grand Monarque. But a revolution in literature and art is as difficult to moderate as a revolution in government: it is idle to play Canute, and say 'thus far shalt thou go, and no farther,' to the advancing waves of thought: we must take the evil with the good; and it was Victor Hugo himself who drew a parallel between the excesses of the Reign of Terror and what he called the nightmares of the new school, as the necessities or inevitable results of progress. The extravagance to which they pushed their doctrine may be collected from the fact that, on the night of their crowning triumph after the first representation of 'Henri Trois,' a party of them formed a ring by joining hands in the *foyer* of the Théâtre-Français, and danced round the bust of Racine, shouting in chorus, '*Enfoncé, Racine! Enfoncé, Racine!*' Dumas, to do him justice, never lost his reverence for the best classic models, and in the first of his accepted dramas, 'Christine,' he was obviously still trammelled by their rules. The representation of this play was indefinitely postponed through a theatrical intrigue, which is amusingly detailed in the memoirs:

'What happened to me during this period of suspense? One of those accidents which only happen to the predestined gave me the subject of Henri Trois as another had given me the subject of Christine. The only cupboard in my bureau was common to Ferisse (his fellow-clerk) and me. In it I



kept my paper: he, his bottles. One day, whether by inadvertence or to establish the superiority of his rights, he took away the key of this cupboard. Having three or four documents to transcribe, and being out of paper, I repaired to the accountant's office to get some. A volume of Anquetil lay open upon a desk: I cast my eyes mechanically on the page and read what follows.'

What he read was a scene between the Duc de Guise and the Duchesse, in which the Duc compels her to choose between the dagger and the bowl. This led Dumas to study the domestic history of the pair and the manners of the period. The result was the play familiar to English readers as 'Catherine of Cleves.' It succeeded, and deserved to succeed: the historical portraits were true and life-like; the tone and manners in perfect keeping with the times; and the leading scenes admirably adapted for effect. The part of the Duchesse was played by Mademoiselle Mars, who was the tyrant of the green-room as well as the queen of the stage:

"After the reading, I was summoned to the director's cabinet, where I found Mademoiselle Mars, who began with that sort of brutality which was habitual to her!—"Ah, it is you? We must take care not to make the same *bêtises* as in 'Christine.'—"What *bêtises*, Madame?"—"In the distribution of parts."—"True, I had the honour of giving you the part of Christine, and you have not acted it."—"That may be: there is a good deal to be said on that subject; but I promise you I will play that of the Duchess of Guise."—"Then, you take it?"—"Of course. Was it not intended forme?"—"Certainly, Madame."—"Well then?"—"Therefore I thank you most sincerely." "Now, the Duc de Guise. To whom do you give the Duc de Guise?"

They differ upon this part and two or three others which Dumas refuses to her friends—

"So far so good: now for the page. I play three scenes with him. I give you fair warning that I insist on some one who suits me for this part."—"There is Madame Menjaud, who will play it to admiration."—"Madame Menjaud has

talent, but she wants the physical qualities for the part.”—  
 “Oh, this is too much! And doubtless this part is given too?”—“Yes, Madame, it is, to Mademoiselle Louise Despreaux.” “Choose her for a page!” “Why not? Is she not pretty?”—“Oh yes, but it is not enough to be pretty.” “Has she not talent?”—“It may come in time; but make that little girl play the page!” “I am ready to listen to any good reason why she should not.”—“Well then, see her in tights; and you will see that she is horribly knockkneed.”  
 \* \* \* \* \*

‘I made my bow and took my departure, leaving Mademoiselle Mars stupified. It was the first time an author had held out against her. I must confess, however, that the legs of my page kept running in my head.’

The young lady turned out an unexceptionable page in all respects; and Dumas explains that the real objection to her was her youth. Mademoiselle Mars at fifty-one did not wish to be brought into close contact with sweet seventeen.

From the moment Dumas took up the position of—

‘Some youth his parents’ wishes doom’d to cross,  
 Who pens a stanza when he should engross,’

his official superiors lost no opportunity of finding fault with him, and at length the Duc d’Orléans was overpersuaded to write against his name: *Supprimer les gratifications de M. Alexandre Dumas, qui s’occupe de littérature*. Unabashed by this marked disapproval, Dumas, the day before the first performance of his play, boldly presented himself at the Palais-Royal and demanded to speak with his royal master. Under the belief that he came by appointment, he was admitted.

“So, M. Dumas, it is you. What good wind brings you, or rather brings you back?”—“Monseigneur, ‘Henri Trois’ is to be brought out to-morrow, and I came to ask your Highness, as a favour, or rather an act of justice, to attend my first representation. During a full year passed since your Highness has been assured that I am a vain, headstrong, foolish fellow—during a full year I have maintained

that I am a humble and hard-working poet : you have sided, without hearing me, with my accusers. Haply your Highness should have waited : your Highness judged differently and has not waited. To-morrow the cause comes before the public to be judged. Be present, Monseigneur, at the judgment. This is the prayer I come to prefer."

" " With the greatest pleasure," replied the Prince, 'after a brief hesitation, "but unluckily it is impossible ; judge for yourself. I have twenty or thirty princes and princesses to dinner to-morrow." " Does your Highness believe that the first performance of ' Henri Trois ' would be a curious spectacle to offer to these princes and princesses ? " " How can I offer it to them ? The dinner is at six and the performance begins at seven."—" Let Monseigneur put on the dinner an hour, I will put off ' Henri Trois ' an hour. Your Highness will have three hours to satisfy the appetites of your august guests." " But where shall I put them ? I have only three boxes."—" I have requested the administration not to dispose of the gallery till I should have seen your Highness." " You took for granted then that I should consent to attend."—" I reckoned on your justice. . . . Monseigneur, I appeal to Philip sober."

This was published, and passed unchallenged, when Philip sober was on the throne. The house was crowded with princes and notabilities : twenty louis were given for a box. The fate of the piece hung on the third act, especially on the scene where the Duc, grasping his wife's wrist with his gauntleted hand, compels her to write the note of assignation to Saint-Megrin. ' This scene raised cries of terror, but simultaneously elicited thunders of applause : it was the first time that dramatic scenes of such force, I may also say of such brutality, had been risked upon the boards.'

At the conclusion of the third act, Dumas hurries off to the sick-bed of his mother, and returns just in time to witness a complete success and receive the enthusiastic congratulations of his friends. ' Few men have seen so rapid a change operated in their life as was operated in mine during the five hours that the repre-

sentation lasted. Completely unknown the evening before, I was the talk of all Paris, for evil or for good, on the morrow. There are enmities, enmities of persons I have never seen, enmities that date from the obtrusive noise made by my name at this epoch. There are friendships, too, that date from it. How many envied me this evening, who little thought that I passed the night on a mattress by the bedside of my dying mother.'

The Duc d'Orléans (Louis Philippe) was present at the second representation also, and called Dumas to his box. After the expected compliments and congratulations, he was informed that he had nearly got his royal patron into a scrape—

"How so, Monseigneur?" "Why, *à propos* of your drama. The king (Charles X.) sent for me yesterday, and began, '*Mon Cousin* (laying a marked emphasis on our relationship), I am told that you have in your employment a young man who has written a play in which we both have parts, I that of Henri Trois, and you that of the Duc de Guise.'"—"Your highness might have replied that this young man was no longer in your employment." "No, I declined saying what was not true, for I retain you. I replied, 'Sire, you have been misinformed for three reasons. The first is that I do not use personal violence to my wife; the second, that she is not unfaithful to me; the third, that your Majesty has no more faithful subject than myself.' Is not this a better reply than the one you suggested to me?"

An attempt was made to prevent the second representation of the piece through the censorship, and, on this failing, a formal protest against its admission into the repertory of the Théâtre Français, signed by seven men of letters more or less eminent, was presented to the King, who replied, in terms no doubt suggested by his Minister, Martignac:

"Messieurs: Je ne puis rien pour ce que vous désirez; je n'ai, comme tous les Français, qu'une place au parterre."

The utmost that could be urged against the origin-

ality of this play was that two or three incidents had been borrowed and turned to good account. The act of violence by which the Duc de Guise extorts the signature of his wife was probably suggested by the scene in 'The Abbot' between Lord Lindsay and Queen Mary. In 'The conspiracy of Venice,' Fiesco's suspicions are excited by finding his wife's handkerchief wet with tears in a room which she and Calcagno have just left; and the Duchesse de Guise's handkerchief, found in a compromising spot, is what first turns the Duc's suspicions on her lover. This incident gave rise to the epigram :

*'Messieurs et Mesdames, cette pièce est morale,  
Elle prouve aujourd'hui, sans faire de scandale,  
Que chez un amant, lorsqu'on va le soir,  
On peut oublier tout—excepté son mouchoir.'*

Although the accusation of immorality was unscrupulously brought against the chiefs of the romantic school, they were not more open to it than the classicists in regard to the choice of subjects, so long as these were taken from history. The most repulsive subject ever chosen by either of them, that of 'La Tour de Nesle' for example, was not more repulsive than that of 'Medea' or 'Œdipus;' and neither Lucrece Borgia nor Marion Delorme could be put to shame by Phèdre, who sums up her ruling passion in one line :

*'C'est Venus tout entière à sa proie attachée.'*

A plot laid in the middle ages, in a corrupt French or Italian court, should be judged by the same rules as one laid in Thebes or Colchis. Nor should a poet or dramatist be summarily condemned for immorality, merely because he describes immoral actions or brings immoral characters on the stage, so long as these are true to nature and correct representatives of their epoch, with its passions, its vices, and its crimes. Dramas can no more be compounded entirely of virtue,

than revolutions can be made with rose-water. It was when Dumas abandoned the past for the present, forsook romance for reality, chose his heroes and heroines from modern life, and bade us sympathise with their perverted notions of right and wrong, their systematic defiance of all social ties, their sensuality and their selfishness,—when, in short, he ‘dressed up the nineteenth century in a livery of heroism, turned up with assassination and incest,’ that he justly fell within the critic’s ban, and gave point to the most stinging epigram levelled at his school :

‘A croire ces Messieurs, on ne voit dans les rues,  
Que des enfants trouvés et des femmes perdues.’

In his drama of ‘Antony’ he set all notions of morality at defiance ; yet his bitterest opponents were obliged to confess that it bore the strongest impress of originality, and that its faults were quite as much those of the epoch, of the applauding public, as of the author. ‘It contains,’ says one of them, ‘badly put together, illogical and odious as it is, scenes of touching sensibility and intense pathos.’ ‘It is perhaps the play,’ says Bulwer, ‘in which the public have seen most to admire. The plot is simple, the action rapid ; each act contains an event, and each event develops the character, and tends to the catastrophe.’

Antony is a man formed after the Byronic model, gloomy and saturnine, whose birth (illegitimate) and position are a mystery. He is in love with Adèle, a young lady of family and fortune, who returns his passion, but not venturing to propose to her, he suddenly disappears, and is absent for three years ; at the end of which he returns, to find her the wife of Colonel d’Hervey, with a daughter. In the first act an opportune accident causes him to be domiciled in her house whilst her husband is away.<sup>1</sup> Explanations take place. He elo-

<sup>1</sup> *A propos* of plagiarism, this mode of bringing the lover under the

quently expatiates on his love, his heart-broken condition, his despair; and Adèle, distrusting her own powers of prolonged resistance, suddenly gives him the slip, orders post-horses, and makes the best of her way to join the Colonel at Frankfort. She is pursued by Antony, who passes her on the road, arrives first at the little inn at which she is compelled to sleep for want of post-horses, and makes arrangements as to rooms, which may be collected from the result.

*'Adèle. Jamais il n'est arrivé d'accident dans cet hôtel ?*

*L'Hôtesse. Jamais. . . . Si Madame veut, je ferai veiller quelqu'un ?*

*Adèle. Non, non . . . au fait, pardon . . . laissez-moi . . . (Elle rentre dans le cabinet et ferme la porte).*

*Antony paraît sur le balcon, derrière la fenêtre, casse un carreau, passe son bras, ouvre l'espagnolette, entre vivement, et va mettre le verrou à la porte par laquelle est sortie l'hôtesse.*

*Adèle (sortant du cabinet). Du bruit . . . un homme . . . ah ! . . .*

*Antony. Silence ! . . . (La prenant dans ses bras et lui mettant un mouchoir sur la bouche.) C'est moi . . . moi, Antony . . . (Il l'entraîne dans le cabinet).'*

This is the end of the third act. In the fourth, the lovers are again in Paris and suffering tortures from the sarcasms and covert allusions of their social circle, in which their inn adventure has got wind. Antony, hearing that the Colonel will arrive within the hour, has only just time to prepare Adèle for the meeting. We borrow Bulwer's translation of the catastrophe :

*'Adèle. Oh ! it's he. . . . Oh ! my God: my God ! Have pity on me ! pardon, pardon !*

*Antony. Come, it is over now !*

*Adèle. Somebody's coming upstairs . . . somebody rings. It's my husband—fly, fly !*

conjugal roof is employed by Charles de Bernard in his fascinating novel 'Gerfault.'

*Antony (fastening the door).* Not I—I fly not . . . Listen! . . . You said just now that you did not fear death.

*Adèle.* No, no . . . Oh! kill me, for pity's sake.

*Antony.* A death that would save thy reputation, that of thy child?

*Adèle.* I'll beg for it on my knees.

*(A voice from without, "Open, open! break open the door!")*

*Antony.* And in thy last breath thou wilt not curse thy assassin?

*Adèle.* I'll bless him—but be quick . . . that door.

*Antony.* Fear nothing! death shall be here before any one. But reflect on it well—death!

*Adèle.* I beg it—wish it—implore it *(throwing herself into his arms)*—I come to seek it.

*Antony (kissing her).* Well then, die.

*(He stabs her with a poniard.)*

*Adèle (falling into a fauteuil).* Ah!

*(At the same moment the door is forced open, Col. d'Hervey rushes on the stage.)*

#### SCENE IV.

*Col. d'Hervey, Antony, Adèle, and different servants.*

*Col. d'Hervey,* Wretch!—What do I see?—*Adèle!*

*Antony.* Dead, yes, dead!—*she resisted me, and I assassinated her.*

*(He throws his dagger at the Colonel's feet.)*

In point of conventional delicacy or propriety, the action of this play is not more objectionable than 'La Grande Duchesse,' and even the concluding scene of the third act is not more hazardous than the critical one in 'Tartuffe,' nor than the famous scene in 'Les Intimes,' which, after an unavailing remonstrance from our decorous and esteemed Lord Chamberlain, Made-moiselle Fargueil played in her own manner to one of the most aristocratic audiences which this metropolis could supply. But the profound immorality, the ingrained corruption and perversion of principle, the mockery of sensibility, which pervade 'Antony,' and



struck a sympathetic chord in a highly cultivated audience (half the notabilities of Paris being present at the first representation) are positively startling. There is nothing to idealise; nothing to throw a delusive halo over vice; not a particle of ennobling passion—

‘That exquisite passion—ay, exquisite, even  
In the ruin its madness too often hath made,  
As it keeps even then a bright trace of the heaven,  
The heaven of virtue, from which it has strayed.’

What one redeeming quality has Adèle, who only shrinks from remaining under the conjugal roof and affecting innocence, for fear of discovery? What one redeeming quality has Antony, if we except the nerve to perpetrate crime and the courage to face the criminal court? He is hard, selfish, material, brutal throughout; and the crowning atrocity is an absurdity. There is a charming novel by Count de Jarnac in which the hero endures torture, and is ready to endure death, rather than compromise a woman. This is natural and (it is to be hoped) not very improbable. But how could Antony hope to silence a scandal, which was already the talk of Paris, by deepening it? What human being would believe that he had killed his known, almost avowed, mistress for resisting him! But the French mind, or rather the mind of the French play-going public, is so constituted that a moral paradox or sentimental extravagance fascinates them, and they will applaud impulsively whatever creates a sensation or excites, however false or foolish in conception or in act. And that public, when ‘Antony’ was brought out, was still fevered and disordered, still seething and surging, from the Revolution of July. The subversive spirit was in the ascendant: established rules and principles had shared the fate of established institutions: the legitimate drama had fallen with the legitimate monarchy; and the Academy was at a discount, like the throne.

The sole place of refuge for the classic muse, the single fane at which the sacred fire was still kept burning by her worshippers, was the Théâtre Français. Yet it only escaped profanation by a caprice. 'Antony' had been accepted there: an early day had been fixed for the first representation, and the company were assembled for the last rehearsal, when Dumas hurries in with excuses for being late, and the following dialogue takes place between him and Mademoiselle Mars, who was to play Adèle:

*Mars.* The delay is of no consequence; you have heard what has happened? We are to have a new chandelier, and be lighted with gas!

*Dumas.* So much the better.

*Mars.* Not exactly; I have laid out 1200 francs (48 pounds) for your piece. I have four different *toilettes*.<sup>1</sup> I wish them to be seen; and since we are to have a new chandelier——

*Dumas.* How soon?

*Mars.* In three months.

*Dumas.* Well!

*Mars.* Well, we will play *Antony* to inaugurate the new lustre.'

The new lustre was a pretence. The company of the classical theatre had resolved not to act the piece. It was immediately transferred to the more congenial atmosphere of the Porte St. Martin, to which Victor Hugo emigrated about the same time; and this theatre thenceforth became the head-quarters of their school. The part of Adèle was played by Madame Dorval, and played *con amore* in every sense of the phrase. On learning the arrival of her husband, Adèle exclaims, *Mais je suis perdue, moi!* At the last rehearsal, Madame Dorval was still at a loss how to give full effect to these words, and stepping forward, requested to speak to the author. 'How did Mademoiselle Mars

<sup>1</sup> We beg our female readers to mark this and meditate on it. Four complete *toilettes* or costumes for forty-eight pounds!

say *Mais je suis perdue, moi*? 'She was sitting down, and she stood up.' 'Good,' replied Dorval, 'I will be standing up, and sit down.' On the first night of the performance, owing to some inadvertence, the arm-chair into which she was to drop was not properly placed, and she fell back against the arm, but the words were given with so thrilling an expression of despair that the house rang with applause.

The key to the plot being in the last position and last words, the angry disappointment of the audience may be guessed, when one evening the stage-manager let down the curtain as soon as Antony had stabbed Adèle. *Le dénouement ! Le dénouement !* was the sustained cry from every part of the house ; till Madame Dorval resumed her recumbent position, as dead or dying woman, to complete the performance. But Bocage (who acted Antony), furious at the blunder, stayed away, and the call was renewed in menacing tones, when Dorval raised her drooping head, reanimated her inert form, advanced to the footlights, and in the midst of a dead silence, gave the words with a startling and telling variation : *Messieurs, je lui résistais, il m'a assassinée*. Dumas complacently records this incident with apparent unconsciousness of the ridicule which it mingles with the supposed pathos or horror of the catastrophe.

The chief honours of the poetical revolution are assigned by Dumas to Lamartine and Victor Hugo, but the dramatic revolution, he insists, began with the first representation of 'Henri Trois.' Hugo, an anxious spectator, was one of the first to offer his congratulations : 'It is now my turn,' were his words to Dumas, 'and I invite you to be present at the first reading.' The day following he chose his subject ; and 'Marion Delorme,' begun on the 1st June, 1829, was finished on the 27th. Dumas was true to his engagement, and at the end of the reading he exclaimed to the Director—

'We are all done brown (*flambés*) if Victor has not this very day produced the best piece he ever will produce—only I believe he has.' 'Why so?' 'Because there are in "Marion Delorme" all the qualities of the mature author, and none of the faults of the young one. Progress is impossible for any one who begins by a complete or nearly complete work.'

'Marion Delorme' was stopped by the Censorship, and did not appear till after 'Antony.' The striking similarity between the two heroes of the two pieces respectively raised and justified a cry that one was copied from the other, and suspicion fell upon Hugo, who came last before the public; when Dumas gallantly stepped forward and declared that, if there was any plagiarism in the matter, he was the guilty person, since, before writing 'Antony,' he had attended the reading of 'Marion Delorme.'

An amusing instance of the manner in which Hugo was piqued into abandoning the Théâtre Français for the Porte St. Martin, is related by Dumas. At the rehearsal of 'Hernani,' the author as usual being seated in the pit, Mademoiselle Mars, who played Doña Sol, came forward to the footlights shading her eyes with her hand and, affecting not to see Hugo, asked if he was there. He rose and announced his presence:

"Ah, good. Tell me, M. Hugo, I have to speak this verse—

Vous êtes mon lion ! Superbe et généreux."

"Yes, madame, Hernani says—

Hélas ! j'aime pourtant d'un amour bien profond !  
Ne pleure pas . . . mourons plutôt. Que n'ai-je un monde,  
Je te le donnerais ! . . . Je suis bien malheureux.

"And you reply—

Vous êtes mon lion ! Superbe et généreux."

"And you like that, M. Hugo? To say the truth, it seems so droll for me to call M. Firmin *mon lion*."

"Ah, because in playing the part of Doña Sol, you wish

to continue Mademoiselle Mars. If you were truly the ward of Ruy Gomez de Sylva, a noble Castilian of the sixteenth century, you would not see M. Firmin in Hernani; you would see one of those terrible leaders of bands that made Charles V. tremble in his capital. You would feel that such a woman may call a man her *lion*, and you would not think it droll."

"Very well; since you stick to your lion, I am here to speak what is set down for me. There is *mon lion* in the manuscript, so here goes, M. Firmin—

Vous êtes mon lion ! Superbe et généreux."

At the actual representation she broke faith, and substituted *Monseigneur* for *mon lion*, which (at all events from the author's point of view) was substituting prose for poetry. Nothing can be more injudicious or vain than the attempt to tone down a writer of originality or force; for the electric chain of imagination or thought may be broken by the change or omission of a word. The romantic school which delighted in hazardous effects,—in effects often resting on the thin line which separates the sublime from the ridiculous,—could least of all endure this description of criticism. Dumas suffered like his friend; and their concerted secession to the Porte St. Martin was a prudent as well as inevitable step.

At this theatre Dumas was like the air, a chartered libertine; and here he brought out a succession of pieces, which, thanks to his prodigality of resource and unrivalled knowledge of stage effect, secured and permanently retained an applauding public, although many of them seemed written to try to what extent the recognised rules of art might be set aside. To take 'La Tour de Nesle,' for example, we agree with Bulwer, that, judged by the ordinary rules of criticism, it is a melodramatic monstrosity; but if you think that to seize, to excite, to suspend, to transport the feelings of an audience, to keep them with an eye eager, an

attention unflagged, from the first scene to the last—if you think that to do this is to be a dramatist, that to have done this is to have written a drama—bow down to M. Dumas or M. Gaillard, to the author of ‘*La Tour de Nesle*’ whoever he be, that man is a dramatist, the piece he has written is a drama,—

‘Go and see it! There is great art, great nature, great improbability, all massed and mingled all together in the rapid rush of terrible things, which pour upon you, press upon you, keep you fixed to your seat, breathless, motionless. And then a pause comes—the piece is over—you shake your head, you stretch your limbs, you still feel shocked, bewildered, and walk home as if awakened from a terrible nightmare. Such is the effect of the “*Tour de Nesle*.”’

Such *was* the effect when Mademoiselle Georges played Marguerite, and Frédéric Le Maître, Buridan; and (independently of the acting) the rapid succession of surprises makes it a masterpiece in its way. No one can doubt that these are the creation of Dumas, along with everything else that constitutes the distinctive merit or demerit of the piece. We should also say, Go and see ‘*Mademoiselle de Belle Isle*:’ you will follow the action with rapt and constantly growing interest; and you will listen to sparkling dialogue, exquisitely adapted to the characters.

It was as a dramatist that Dumas became famous, although his world-wide renown is owing to his romances, which he composed at headlong speed contemporaneously with his dramas, without much adding to his reputation, until 1844–45, when he published ‘*Les Trois Mousquetaires*,’ ‘*Vingt Ans Après*,’ and ‘*Monte Christo*,’ the most popular of his works. There is hardly an inhabited district in either hemisphere, in which Dumas, pointing to a volume of one of them, might not exclaim like Johnson pointing to a copy of

the duodecimo edition of his Dictionary in a country-house :—

*'Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?'*

They have remained the most popular, and remained moreover exclusively associated with his name, although the authorship has been confidently assigned by critics of repute to others, and the most persistent ridicule has been levelled at their conception, their composition, their materials, and their plan. Amongst the most mischievous assailants was Thackeray, in a letter addressed to M. le Marquis Davy de la Pailleterie, printed in the '*Révue Britannique*' for January, 1847. We give a specimen :

*'As for me, I am a decided partisan of the new system of which you are the inventor in France. I like your romances in one-and-twenty volumes, whilst regretting all the time that there are so many blank pages between your chapters and so small an amount of printed matter in your pages. I, moreover, like your continuations. I have not skipped a word of "Monte Christo," and it made me quite happy when, after having read eight volumes of the "Trois Mousquetaires," I saw M. Rolandi, the excellent circulating-library man who supplies me with books, bring me ten more under the title of "Vingt Ans Après." May you make Athos, Porthos, and Aramis live a hundred years, to treat us to twelve volumes more of their adventures! May the physician (Médecin) whose "Mémoires" you have taken in hand, beginning them at the commencement of the reign of Louis XV., make the fortunes of the apothecaries of the Revolution of July by his prescriptions!'*

Innumerable readers would reciprocate in earnest the wishes thus ironically expressed, and Thackeray might have remembered that length is more a merit than an objection so long as interest is kept up. It is strange, too, that he should have hailed Dumas as the inventor of the voluminous novel, particularly after calling attention to the blank pages between his chapters and the small amount of printed matter in his

pages. There is an English translation of 'Les Trois Mousquetaires,' in one royal-octavo volume, and of 'Monte Christo' in three volumes octavo. The seven volumes of 'Clarissa Harlow' contain more printed matter than the longest of Dumas's romances. Mademoiselle Scudéry beats him hollow in length and might be apostrophised like her brother—

'Bienheureux Scudéry, dont la fertile plume,  
Peut tous les mois sans peine enfanter un volume.'

So does Restif de la Bretonne, one of the most popular novelists of the eighteenth century, whose 'Les Contemporaines' is in forty-two volumes.

So much for length. In point of plot, they are on a par with 'Don Quixote' and 'Gil Blas : ' in point of incident, situation, character, animated narrative, and dialogue, they will rarely lose by comparison with the author of 'Waverley.' Compare, for example, the scene in 'Les Trois Mousquetaires' between Buckingham and Anne of Austria, with the strikingly analogous scene between Leicester and Elizabeth in 'Kenilworth.'

If Dumas occasionally spun out his romances till they grew wearisome, it was not because he was incapable of compressing them. His 'Chevalier d'Harmenthal,' which we are inclined to consider one of his best novels, is contained in three volumes. His 'Impressions de Voyage' abound in short novels and stories which are quite incomparable in their way, like pictures by Meissonnier and Gerome. Take for dramatic effect, the story told by the monk of La Chartreuse ; or, for genuine humour, that of Pierrot, the donkey, who had such a terror of fire and water that they were obliged to blind him before passing a forge or a bridge. The explanation is, that two young Parisians had hired him for a journey ; and, having recently suffered from cold, they hit upon an expedient which they carried into execution without delay. They began



by putting a layer of wet turf upon his back, then a layer of snow, then another layer of turf, and lastly a bundle of firewood, which they lighted; and thus improvised a moveable fire to warm them on their walk. All went well till the turf was dried and the fire reached poor Pierrot's back, when he set off braying, kicking, and rolling, till he rolled into an icy stream, where he lay for some hours; so as to be half frozen after being half roasted. Hence the combination of hydrophobia and pyrophobia which afflicted him.

Where Dumas erred and fell behind was in pushing to excess the failing with which Byron reproached Scott—

‘ Let others spin their meagre brains for hire,  
Enough for genius if itself inspire.’

He could not resist the temptation of making hay whilst the sun shone—of using his popularity as if, like the purse of Fortunatus, it had been inexhaustible—of overtasking his powers till, like those of the overtaken elephant, they proved unequal to the call. There was a period, near the end of his life, when Theodore Hook, besides editing a newspaper and a magazine, was (to use his own expression) driving three novels or stories abreast—in other words, contemporaneously composing them. Dumas boasts of having engaged for five at once; and the tradesmanlike manner in which he made his bargains was remarkable. ‘ M. Véron (the proprietor of the ‘*Constitutionnel*’) came to me and said: “ We are ruined if we do not publish, within eight days, an amusing, sparkling, interesting romance.”—“ You require a volume: that is, 6000 lines: that is, 135 pages of my writing. Here is paper; number and mark (*paraphez*) 135 pages.” ’

Sued for non-performance of contract, and pleading his own cause, he magniloquently apostrophised the Court: ‘ The Academicians are Forty. Let them contract to supply you with eighty volumes in a year;

they will make you bankrupt! Alone I have done what never man did before nor ever will do again.' We need hardly add that the stipulated work was imperfectly and unequally done—

*'Sunt bona, sunt mediocria, sunt mala plura.'*

Du Halde is said to have composed his '*Description géographique et historique*' of China without quitting Paris, and Dumas certainly wrote '*Quinze Jours au Sinai*' and '*De Paris à Astracan*,' without once setting foot in Asia. But most of his '*Impressions de Voyage*,' in France, Italy, Spain, &c., were the results of actual travel; and his expedition to Algeria in a Government steamer with a literary mission from the Government, gave rise to an animated debate in the Chamber of Deputies (February 10, 1847), in which he was rudely handled till M. de Salvandy (Minister of Public Instruction) came to the rescue, and, after justifying the mission, added: 'The same writer had received similar missions under administrations anterior to mine.' Dumas (we are assured) meditated a challenge to M. Léon de Malleville for injurious words spoken in this debate, and requested M. Viennet, as President of the Society of Men of Letters, to act as his friend. M. Viennet, after desiring the request to be reduced to writing, wrote a formal refusal, alleging that M. Dumas, having in some sort, before the civil tribunal of the Seine, abdicated the title of man of letters to assume that of marquis, had no longer a claim on the official head of the literary republic. Hereupon the meditated challenge was given up. The representation of '*Les Mohicans de Paris*,' a popular drama brought out by Dumas in 1864, having been prohibited by the Censorship, he addressed and printed a spirited remonstrance to the Emperor:

'Sire,—There were in 1880, and there are still, three men at the head of French literature. These three men are Victor Hugo, Lamartine, and myself.

‘Victor Hugo is proscribed ; Lamartine is ruined. People cannot proscribe me like Hugo ; there is nothing in my life, in my writings, or in my words, for proscription to fasten on. But they can ruin me like Lamartine ; and in effect they are ruining me.

‘I know not what ill-will animates the Censorship against me. I have written and published twelve hundred volumes. It is not for me to appreciate them in a literary point of view. Translated into all languages, they have been as far as steam could carry them. Although I am the least worthy of the three, these volumes have made me, in the five parts of the world, the most popular of the three ; perhaps because one is a thinker, the other a dreamer, and I am but a vulgariser (*vulgarisateur*).

‘Of these twelve hundred volumes, there is not one which may not be given to read to a workman of the Faubourg St. Antoine, the most republican—or to a young girl of the Faubourg St. Germain, the most modest—of all our faubourgs.’

His politics were never incendiary or dangerous in any way. They were always those of a moderate Republican, and he consistently adhered to them. His best romances rarely transgress propriety, and are entirely free from that hard, cold, sceptical, materialist, illusion-destroying tone, which is so repelling in Balzac and many others of the most popular French novelists. But Dumas must have formed a strange notion of the young ladies of the noble faubourg to suppose that they could sit out a representation of ‘Antony’ or ‘Angèle’ without a blush. After recapitulating the misdeeds of the imperial censorship and the enormous losses he had sustained, he concludes :

‘I appeal, then, for the first time, and probably for the last, to the prince whose hand I had the honour to clasp at Arenenberg, at Ham, and at the Élysée, and who, having found me in the character of proselyte on the road of exile and on that of the prison, has never found me in the character of petitioner on the road of the empire.’

The Emperor, who never turned a deaf ear on a

proselyte or companion on either road, immediately caused the prohibition to be withdrawn.

One of the strangest episodes of the Neapolitan revolution was the appearance of Alexandre Dumas as its annalist. His arrival at Turin, on his way to Naples, created a sensation; and M. d'Ideville, who had been acquainted with him at Paris, was commissioned by the Marchese Alfieri (Cavour's niece) to ask if it would be agreeable to him to meet Cavour and some other persons of literary or political distinction at her *salon*. The invitation was declined:

“Convey my warmest acknowledgments and deepest regrets to the Marchesa: it is impossible for me to accept. Would you like to know why? Well, then, I should meet her uncle, the Count de Cavour, and I would not see him for any money. This surprises you, my dear friend. I will tell you my reason. I leave Turin in twenty-four hours: I embark at Genoa: in three days I shall be with Garibaldi. I do not know him, but I have written to him: he expects me. This man is a hero, a sublime adventurer, a personage of romance. With him, out of him, I expect to make something. He is a madman, a simpleton, if you like, but an heroic simpleton; we shall get on capitally together. What would you have *me* make out of Cavour; me, remember? Cavour is a great statesman, a consummate politician, a man of genius. He is a cut above Garibaldi; don't I know it? But he does not wear a red shirt. He wears a black coat, a white cravat, like an advocate or a diplomate. I should see him, I should converse with him, and, like so many others, I should be seduced by his play of mind and his good sense. Adieu to my promising expedition. My Garibaldi would be spoilt. On no consideration, then, will I see your President of the Council. He cannot be my man any more than I can be his. I am an artist, and Garibaldi alone has attractions for me. Although I visit no one here but deputies of the Extreme Left, Brofferio, and others, tell M. Cavour, I beg, that I fly from him because I admire him; and make him clearly understand why I quit Turin without seeing him.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Journal d'une Diplomate en Italie. Paris, 1872.

Dumas judged rightly. He would have made nothing out of Cavour, and he made a very good thing out of Garibaldi; although not exactly as he had anticipated, namely, by treating him artistically and making him the picturesque hero of a romance. Garibaldi was too picturesque already to stand any fresh draping and colouring. As not unfrequently happens, no ideal could surpass the real, no fiction could improve upon the fact. He stood in no need of the *vate sacro*; in his case, the simplest chronicler was the best, and the simplest might well be suspected of exaggeration by posterity. Dumas's books on Garibaldi and his exploits never attracted much attention and are already forgotten. But the hero and the romanticist became sworn friends at sight, and Dumas was immediately installed in the palace of Chiatamone with the title and perquisites of Superintendent or Director of the Fine Arts. Here he lived at free quarters till the dictatorship ended and order was restored.

The next time Dumas passed through Turin, M. d'Ideville met him at a supper party, Garibaldi became the subject of conversation, and it appeared that Dumas's enthusiasm had been in no respect lessened by familiarity:

'Towards the end of the entertainment, to close the series of anecdotes relating to the dictator: "See here," said Dumas, with singular solemnity and unfolding a scrap of paper, "here are lines written by him which shall never quit me! You must know, my friends, that having had a fancy to see Victor Emmanuel, whom I do not know, I asked Garibaldi for a note of introduction to present to the King." "Here," replied Garibaldi, handing me these words hastily written, "this will be your passport." And the charming narrator passed round the scrap of crumpled paper, which contained this unique phrase: "*Sire, recevez Dumas, c'est mon ami et le vôtre.—G. Garibaldi.*" "You may well believe," added Dumas, respectfully replacing the letter in his breast pocket, "that to preserve this autograph, which

the King would doubtless have desired to keep, I deprived myself, without regret, of the acquaintance of King Victor. And now that the sovereign has shown his ingratitude towards Garibaldi, to whom he is so much obliged, you may judge whether he will not have a long time to wait for my visit.”

The illness which ended with his death, brought on a complete paralysis of all his faculties, and he died towards the close of 1870, happily insensible to the hourly increasing disasters and humiliations of his country.

Occurring at a less anxious and occupied period, his death would have been commemorated as one of the leading events of the year, and it would hardly have been left to a foreign journal to pay the first earnest tribute to his memory. Take him for all in all, he richly merits a niche in the Temple of Fame; and what writer does not who has been unceasingly before the public for nearly half a century without once forfeiting his popularity?—whose multifarious productions have been equally and constantly in request in London, Paris, St. Petersburg, Vienna, Calcutta, Sydney, and New York. Think of the amount of amusement and information he has diffused, the weary hours he has helped to while away, the despondency he has lightened, the sick-beds he has relieved, the gay fancies, the humorous associations, the inspiriting thoughts, we owe to him. To lie on a sofa and read eternal new novels of Marivaux and Crébillon, was the *beau idéal*, the day dream, of Gray, one of the choicest and most fastidious minds of the eighteenth century; and what is there of Marivaux or Crébillon to compete in attractiveness with the wondrous fortunes of a Monte Christo or the chivalrous adventures of a D'Artagnan?

A title to fame, like a chain of proofs, may be cumulative. It may rest on the multiplicity and univer-

sality of production and capacity. Voltaire, for example, who symbolises an age, produced no one work in poetry or prose that approximates to first-rate in its kind, if we except 'Candide' and 'Zadig;' and their kind is not the first. Dumas must be judged by the same standard; as one who was at everything in the ring, whose foot was ever in the stirrup, whose lance was ever in the rest, who infused new life into the acting drama, indefinitely extended the domain of fiction, and (in his 'Impressions de Voyage') invented a new literature of the road. So judged—as he will be, when French criticism shall raise its drooping head and have time to look about it—he will certainly take rank as one of the three or four most popular, influential and gifted writers that the France of the nineteenth century has produced.

## SALONS.

(FROM FRASERS' MAGAZINE, MAY, 1866.)

*Les Salons de Paris: Foyers éteints.* Par Madame ANCELOT. Paris, 1858.*Les Salons d'Autrefois: Souvenirs intimes.* Par Madame la Comtesse de BASSANVILLE. Préface de M. LOUIS ÉNAULT. Paris, 1862.*Rahel und ihre Zeit.* Von E. SCHMIDT WEISSENFELS. Leipzig, 1851.*Erinnerungsblätter.* Von A. VON STERNBERG. Leipzig, 1857.*The Queens of Society.* By GRACE and PHILIP WHARTON. In Two Volumes. London, 1863.

THE club is an essentially masculine institution: the seat, the central point, of female influence is the *salon*; and an important social question is consequently involved in the fact that clubs have multiplied and thriven in England, whilst the *salon* can scarcely be said to have taken root or prospered largely out of France. So little, indeed, is the institution understood in this country, that we shall probably be required at the outset to explain the precise meaning of the term; and we are not aware that we can supply a better description or definition than we find at the commencement of one of the books which we propose to use as the text-books of this article:

‘When we speak of *salons*,’ says Madame Ancelet, ‘it is well understood that a *salon* has nothing in common with those numerous fêtes where we crowd together people, strangers to one another, who do not converse, and who are there only to dance, to hear music, or to display dresses



more or less sumptuous. No ; that is not what is called a *salon*. A *salon* is an intimate *réunion*, which lasts several years, where we get acquainted and look for one another : where we are glad to meet, and with good reason. The persons who receive are a tie between those who are invited, and this tie is the closer when the recognised merit of a clever woman (*femme d'esprit*) has formed it.

'But many other things are required to form a *salon* : congenial habits, ideas, and tastes ; that urbanity which quickly establishes relations, *allows talking with everybody without being acquainted—which in the olden time was a proof of good education, and of familiarity with circles to which none were admitted otherwise than on the supposition of their being worthy to mix with the greatest and best*. This continual exchange of ideas makes known the value of each : he or she is most welcome who brings most agreeability, without regard to rank or fortune ; and one is appreciated, I might almost say loved, for what one has of real merit : the true king of this kind of republic is the mind (*esprit*) !

'There were formerly in France many *salons* of this kind, which have given the tone to all the *salons* of Europe. The most cited were those in which was carried farthest the art of saying good things well, of pouring forth mind, of diffusing it to be born anew, and of multiplying it by contact. Many of these *salons* have acquired celebrity, and if they have been less numerous and less before the public in our time, it is that, in general, intelligence has been more actively employed, and moreover that politics have made such a noise as prevented anything from being heard.'

Politics, we regret to say, have had a still worse effect on France than preventing anything from being heard : they have also gone far towards preventing anything from being said—that is, anything frankly, freely, or carelessly, anything which could be twisted to the disadvantage of the speaker ; and the complete absence of distrust is essential to the *salon*. It is for this reason probably that the printed experiences of Mesdames de Bassanville and Ancelot break off some

twenty-five years back, when gentlemen and ladies had not begun to look round them in a crowded room before alluding to any of the topics included in the well-known *Index Expurgatorius* of Figaro: 'either to authority, or religion, or morality, or to people in place, or to people out of place, or, in short, to anything that really concerns anybody.'

The work of the Comtesse de Bassanville is a posthumous publication with a preface by the editor, who states that 'the happy *apropos* of her birth placed her on the limits of two worlds, at the moment when the old society which was crumbling, was confronted with the new society which was preparing to succeed it.' The doors of both, he adds, were opened to her by her connections. Her sister-in-law, the Duchesse de Laviano, Neapolitan Ambassadress at Paris, introduced her to the Princess de Vaudemont. Her father was the intimate friend of Isabey, the painter; and one of her uncles had made the campaign of Egypt with Bourrienne. She was also related to the great Parliamentary families of Provence, through whom she became free of the *salon* of the Comtesse de Rumfort.

Madame Ancelot, the wife of the dramatic author and academician, was herself the mistress of a very agreeable *salon*, which boasted a fair sprinkling of notabilities. She was honourably distinguished both in literature and art, and her attractions were not limited to her intellectual gifts or accomplishments. She was *in* as well as *of* the world which she undertakes to portray: she puts down little or nothing at secondhand; and her sketches are almost always redolent of reality and life. She is so wedded to self-dependence that she has not even ventured on an introductory retrospect of the brilliant *salons* or circles of antecedent periods, like those when the *Précieuses* assembled in the Hôtel Rambouillet, or the Du Deffants and D'Épinays (as described by Sydney Smith) 'violated all the common

duties of life, and gave very pleasant little suppers.' The only instance in which she trusts to tradition, confirmed by personal impressions of a later date, is in describing the *salon* of Madame Le Brun, which was founded prior to the Revolution of 1789 and, renewed repeatedly at long intervals, survived the Revolution of July.

Madame Le Brun was largely endowed with all the chief requisites for the position at which she aimed. She had beauty, charm of manner, and celebrity—that kind of celebrity, too, which necessarily brings the possessor into direct contact with other first-class celebrities. She was the female Reynolds or Lawrence of her day: perhaps the most successful portrait-painter of her sex that ever lived. She was elected a member of all the continental academies of painting, and was on the point of being invested with the cordon of St. Michel, when the old monarchy was swept away. She visited most of the European capitals, where her fame had preceded her; and her success kept pace with her fame. She was received by Catherine of Russia with the same favour which had been lavished on her by her first patroness, the ill-starred Marie Antoinette; and she sent from Italy a picture (her portrait of Paësillo) which, when placed alongside of a picture by David, extorted from him the bitter avowal: 'One would believe my picture painted by a woman and the portrait of Paësillo by a man.'

It was Mademoiselle de Staal, we believe, who, when her little room was full, called out to the fresh arrivals on the staircase, 'Attendez que mes sièges soient vides.' Madame Le Brun was frequently in the same predicament in her small apartment of the Rue de Cléry, where, for want of vacant chairs, marshals of France might be seen seated on the floor; a circumstance rendered memorable by the embarrassment of Marshal de Noailles, an enormously fat man, who was

once unable to get up again. The Comte de Vaudreuil, the Prince de Ligne, Diderot, D'Alembert, Marmontel, La Harpe, with a host of great ladies, were amongst the throng, which also comprised a fair allowance of originals. A farmer-general, named Grimod de la Reynière, was conspicuous in this character, if only by dint of his hair, which was curled and puffed to a breadth and height that rendered the putting on of his hat an impossibility. A short man who occupied the seat behind him at the opera, finding the view completely obstructed, contrived little by little to perforate a seeing place through the mass with his fingers. Grimod de la Reynière never stirred during the operation or the performance, but when the piece terminated, he drew a comb from his pocket and calmly presented it to the gentleman, with these words: 'Monsieur, I have permitted you to see the ballet at your ease, not to interfere with your amusement: it is now your turn not to interfere with mine: I am going to a supper party; you must see that I cannot appear there with my hair in its present state, and you will have the goodness to arrange it properly or to-morrow we cross swords.' The peaceful alternative was laughingly accepted and they parted friends.

A similar adventure is related of Turenne in his youth, and ended less agreeably for the future hero, who had cut off the side curls of an elderly chevalier in the pit, in order to see better. The offended senior was one of the best swordsmen in Paris, and Turenne was severely wounded in the duel that ensued. Not long after his recovery, he fell in with his old antagonist, who insisted on a renewal of the combat, with the pleasing intimation that a third or fourth meeting might still leave the satisfaction of wounded honour incomplete. Turenne was run through the sword-arm and confined to his room for some weeks, at the end of which he was thinking how

best to evade the further consequences of his indiscretion, when he was opportunely relieved by the death of the chevalier.

The name is peculiar and a Grimod de la Reynière was the editor and principal writer of the *Almanach des Gourmands*, which set the fashion of that semi-serious mode of discussing gastronomic subjects in which Brillat-Savarin shone pre-eminent and which, we trust, will henceforth be dropped, for nothing can be worse than the taste and style of recent plagiarists and imitators. It was Grimod de la Reynière who said that a gala dinner occupied him five hours, although he could dispatch an ordinary one in three hours and a half, cautioning his readers not to infer that he was a bad breakfast-eater.

Another of Madame Le Brun's *habitués*, the Comte d'Espinchal, prided himself on knowing everybody belonging to what was termed society; and one night at an opera ball he gave a singular proof of the extent and accuracy of his information. Seeing a stranger much agitated, hurrying from one room to another and examining group after group, he volunteered to aid him in the search in which he was apparently engaged. The stranger stated that he had arrived that very morning from Orleans with his wife: that she had begged to be taken to the ball; that he had lost her in the crowd, and that she knew neither the name of their hotel nor that of the street in which they had been set down. 'Make yourself easy,' said M. d'Espinchal, 'your wife is sitting in the *foyer* by the second window. I will take you to her.' He did so, and on being asked how he had recognised her, he replied, 'Nothing is more simple: your wife is the only woman in the ball that I do not know, and I took it for granted that she had just arrived from the country.' The husband was profuse in his thanks; but we are

left in doubt whether the wife was equally grateful for the discovery.

David, the painter, who attached an undue importance to social distinctions from want of early familiarity with people of rank, was blaming Madame Le Brun for receiving so many great lords and ladies. 'Ah!' was her reply, 'you are mortified at not being a duke or marquis; as for me, to whom titles are indifferent, I receive all agreeable people with pleasure.' This was the secret of her success.

The second *salon* on Madame Ancelot's list is also that of a painter, Gerard, whose reputation, dating from the commencement of the century, speedily became European. He ended, we are told, by painting all the crowned heads of the Continent; and it was said of him that he was at once the painter of kings and the king of painters. His houses, in town and country, were open to the *élite* of every land who happened to be sojourning in Paris; and amongst his intimates are enumerated Madame de Staël, Talleyrand, Pozzo di Borgo, Cuvier, Humboldt, Rossini, Martinez de la Rosa, Alfred de Vigny, Beyle, Mérimée, &c. &c. 'In whatever Gerard had set about,' remarks Madame Ancelot, 'he would have succeeded so as to have been found in the first line, and although born in an inferior condition, however high the rank to which he had attained, he would never have been a *parvenu*; he would have been an *arrivé*—arrived by the main road, in the light of day, in the sight, with the knowledge and with the approbation of all.' We should be puzzled to name an instance in which the distinctive merit of the French language is more strikingly illustrated than by the contrast of *arrivé* with *parvenu*.<sup>1</sup>

Gerard's Wednesdays lasted with rare intermissions for thirty years; and their attractive character may be

<sup>1</sup> It was Talleyrand who first placed these words in strong contrast. On some one applying *parvenu* to M. Thiers. 'No,' said Talleyrand, '*arrivé*.'

collected from the varied complexion and acquirements of the company. The evening of her matriculation, Madame Ancelot found Gerard relating as a fact what certainly sounds very like a fable or an acted proverb.

The scene is Florence. A young man of rank calls on a painter named Carlo Pedrero, to order a picture of Hymen. "There is no time to be lost. I want it the day before my marriage with the beautiful Francesca. The God of Marriage must be accompanied by all the Graces and all the Joys: his torch must be more brilliant than that of Love: the expression of his face must be more celestial, and his happiness must appear to be borrowed more from heaven than from earth. Tax your imagination to the uttermost and I will pay you in proportion."

'The painter surpassed himself: what he brought the day before the wedding was a genuine masterpiece; but the young man was not satisfied, and maintained that Hymen was far from being painted with all his charms. The artist took the criticism in good part: made the best excuse in his power on the ground of haste: said that the colours would mellow with time; and took leave, promising to have the picture ready by the return of the bridegroom from his honeymoon trip. At the expiration of some months, the votary of Hymen came to claim the picture, and on the first glance exclaimed, "Ah, you had good reason to say that time would improve your picture! What a difference! However, I cannot help telling you that the face of Hymen is too gay: you have given him a joy-beaming air which by no means belongs to him." "Sir," replied the painter, laughing, "it is not my picture that has changed, but your state of feeling. Some months ago you were in love, now you are—married."'

Gerard had finished his story in the middle of the applauding merriment which it provoked, when one of the listeners struck in: 'And do you know what

happened afterwards?' Every eye turned to him. He was about the same age as Gerard, a little taller, with refined, intelligent and animated features, and his whole exterior conveyed the impression of a man of family with distinction, carelessness and wit. He continued, smiling: 'The painter, content with the price he had received, promised to represent Hymen so as to please both lovers and husbands, and after some months he opened his rooms to the public for the exhibition of this masterpiece, perhaps imprudently promised. The public came, but only a few were admitted at a time. The picture was placed in a long gallery, and quite at the end. The effect of the colours was so contrived as to render the portrait of Hymen appear charming to those who saw it from a distance, but, seen close, it was no longer the same and nothing that had so charmed was discovered in it.'

This ingenious and improvised continuation was duly applauded, not the less when the narrator stood confessed as one of the royalties of science, Alexander von Humboldt. There is a story, however, that compresses the point of the narrative in two pithy sentences, that of the Irishman exclaiming: 'During the first three months after my marriage I was so fond of my wife that I was ready to eat her up: at the end of the second three months I was sorry I did not.'

We are introduced to the Duchess d'Abrantes at the house of Madame Ancelot, exclaiming: 'Qu'on a donc bien ainsi la nuit pour causer. On ne craint ni les ennuyeux ni les *créanciers*.' Here was the secret; she was never out of debt, yet she would have her *salon*, whether in a palace or a garret; and distinguished friends flocked round her to the last. Her eldest son resembled her in improvidence. It was he who produced a piece of stamped paper with the remark: 'You see this piece of paper. It is worth 25 centimes; when I have written my name at the bottom, it will be worth



nothing.' She was the widow of Junot, and descended from the imperial family of Comnène. Balzac, after his presentation to her, exclaimed : 'That woman has seen Napoleon in his infancy ; has seen him a young man, still unknown ; has seen him occupied with the common affairs of life ; then she has seen him grow great, mount high, and cover the world with his name. She is to me like one of the blessed, who should come and seat himself at my side, after having dwelt in heaven close to God.' In his own lodging she had erected a little altar to Napoleon with the inscription : 'Ce qu'il avait commencé par l'épée, je l'achèverai par la plume.'

Associated with this *salon* is the memory of the Marquise de Polastron, the heroine of a romantic passion which has well earned a record by its durability and effects. She was the beloved of the Comte d'Artois, afterwards Charles X., whom she followed to England in 1792. She there gave herself up to devotion, and on her deathbed imparted her religious convictions to the Prince in the sincere and avowed hope of securing their reunion in a better world. Young, handsome and gallant as he was at this epoch, he promised complete fidelity which no time should alter. Madame Ancelot believes that he kept his word, and 'on the throne as well as in exile, nothing could distract him from the austerity of a life, all the poetry of which was an ardent aspiration towards that heaven where the woman he so fondly loved was expecting him.'

It would be difficult to say anything new of Madame Récamier, or to improve upon Madame Mohl's sketch of her beautiful and fascinating friend ;<sup>1</sup> but there is a subdued and refined malice in Madame Ancelot's impressions of this celebrated lady and her *salon* that tempts us to borrow a trait or two. Despite her personal attractions, the charm by which she drew

<sup>1</sup> *Madame Récamier : with a Sketch of the History of Society in France.* By Madame M \* \* \*. London, 1862.

around her such a succession of illustrious admirers is pronounced, on careful analysis, to have been neither more nor less than flattery. She is compared to Sterne's beggar, who never failed to extort a donation from rich and poor, old and young, the most occupied and the most uncharitable, by a dexterous appeal to their self-love; and her stereotyped phrase in addressing an artist, writer, or orator of note, is reported to have run thus: 'The emotion which I feel at the sight of a superior man prevents me from expressing, as I could wish, all my admiration, all my sympathy. But you guess—you comprehend—my emotion says enough.'

This, or something like it, murmured in tremulous tones, with a befitting accompaniment of glances, seldom or never failed; and neither pains nor expense were spared to bring any one whom she especially wished to fascinate within reach of her spell. An amusing story is told of her hiring a house at Auteuil in order to get acquainted with a statesman in power who had taken up his temporary residence there for his health. The plot, we regret to say, failed; either for want of sufficient opportunity or by reason of the pre-occupation of the intended victim.

'The talent, labour and skill which she wasted in her salon' (says Tocqueville) 'would have gained and governed an empire. She was virtuous, if it be virtuous to persuade every one of a dozen men that you wish to favour him, though some circumstance always occurs to prevent your doing so. Every friend thought himself preferred.' She was virtuous (physically) because she could not help being so. If report says true, she was in the state of compelled continence to which Louis Seize was condemned during the early years of his married life.

Chateaubriand, we need hardly state, was for many years the distinguishing feature of her *salon*, where he was worshipped (to borrow Beyle's simile) like the

Grand Lama. When he deigned to talk, everybody was bound to listen ; and nobody was allowed to talk a moment longer than seemed agreeable to the idol, who had well-understood ways of intimating his wearisomeness or impatience. When he was moderately tired of the speaker, he stroked an ugly cat placed purposely on a chair by his side ; when tired beyond endurance, he began playing with a bell-rope conveniently hung within reach. This was the signal for Madame de Récamier to rush to the rescue, *coûte que coûte*. His deafness, too, was observed to come and go upon occasions ; confirming Talleyrand's sarcastic remark, that the author of the *Génie du Christianisme* lost his sense of hearing about the time when the world left off talking of him. His vanity was excessive, but he knew his weakness and could trifle with it ; as Madame Ancelot bears testimony, by repeating his own story of what fell out at the first representation of his tragedy of *Moïse* at the Odéon theatre :

‘I went to bed,’ he said, ‘not wishing to make any change in my habits, lest people should believe me anxious about the result.’ ‘But,’ added he, with a smile, ‘the fact is, I did not go to sleep, and I waited with impatience the arrival of my old servant, whom I had sent with directions to see and listen attentively, so as to give me an account of what took place. I was kept waiting a long time for his return, which induced me to hope that the piece had been acted to the end ; and I was beginning to laugh at myself for refusing to receive news of my work through my friends, competent judges, and for expecting anxiously the opinion of my domestic, when he entered uncereemoniously, excusing himself for arriving so late on the ground of the length of the spectacle, but saying nothing of what had happened. I was obliged to question him.

“Well, how did it go off?”

“ Perfectly, Monsieur le Vicomte. They did indeed try to make a little noise.”

“ During the tragedy ? ”

“ Yes, Monsieur le Vicomte, during the tragedy. But that did not last long, and they soon got merry again.”

“ Merry ? during the tragedy ? ”

“ Oh, yes, Monsieur le Vicomte ; I will answer for it that they were pleased in the pit where I was, for they never left off laughing, and saying such funny things that I laughed heartily too.”

This may pair off with Charles Lamb's story of what occurred during the first (and only) representation of his farce, *Mr. H.* It had not gone far, when his neighbour in the pit turned round to him and said : ‘ This is sad stuff, sir ; I'll hiss if you'll begin.’

Madame Mohl's reminiscences of Madame Récamier and her society give a far more favourable and (we believe) correct impression of them. The following passage may afford a useful hint or two to any English aspirant to the honours of a *salon* :

‘ *Tête-à-têtes* in a low voice were entirely discouraged. If any of the younger *habitués* took this liberty, they received a gentle chiding in a real *tête-à-tête* when everybody was gone. There were generally from six to twelve persons. Madame Récamier sat on one side of the fireplace, the others round in a circle. Two or three stood against the chimney-piece, and spoke loud enough to be heard by all. Whoever had an observation to make contributed it to the common stock. Madame Récamier spoke little, but threw in an occasional word ; or if a new person entered who happened to know anything of the subject going on, she would instantly question him, that the others might be aware of it ; otherwise it was his place to try and understand.’

Speaking of a person who had fine qualities, but, from the violence of her feelings and the vivacity of her fancy, kept those she loved in perpetual agitation,

Madame Récamier said : ' Il n'y a que la raison qui ne fatigue pas à la longue.' Equally suggestive is the maxim : ' On ne plaît pas longtemps si l'on n'a qu'une sorte d'esprit.'

Madame Ancelot has devoted a chapter to the Vicomte d'Arlincourt, although neither his habits nor (during the greater part of his life) his means qualified him for the establishment of a *salon*. He was an amusing combination of talent, amiability and absurdity. His novel, *Le Solitaire*, and some others of his writings, attained temporary popularity ; and he fairly attained the position of a distinguished man of letters, although he tried in vain to consolidate his title by one of the forty *fauteuils* of the Academy. He made up for this disappointment, as he best might, by procuring all the foreign orders he could pick up, and on grand occasions he appeared with three stars, two broad ribands, and seventeen smaller decorations on his breast. Replying rather to a look than a remark directed towards them, he exclaimed to Madame Ancelot : ' I am expecting two more.' In the three-fold capacity of Vicomte, legitimist, and man of letters, he was fond of coupling himself with Chateaubriand : ' Paris,' he would say, ' cares for nothing but her two viscounts—the two great writers of the nineteenth century.' His imitation of his illustrious parallel went to the length of writing a tragedy, *Le Siège de Paris*, which the audience persisted in treating as a comedy. One of the *dramatis personæ* is made to say :

' Mon vieux père, en ce lieu, seul à manger m'apporte.'

This sounded and was understood as ' seul a mangé ma porte ;' on which a man in the pit called out : ' The old fellow must have had good teeth ;' and the joke was clamorously applauded. The author rubbed his hands, delightedly remarking, ' C'est comme Chateaubriand, et comme Victor Hugo.' This is the *vitiis imitabile* with a vengeance.

His legitimist opinions and his reputation procured him an invitation to Frohdorff, the residence of the exiled royal family, where he stayed a fortnight. On leaving he said to one of the suite, 'How I pity these unhappy princesses,' a burst of sentiment which seemed natural enough till he added, 'How bored they will be when I have quitted the palace, for during the last fortnight I read my works aloud to them every evening.'

We now turn to Madame de Bassanville, who has followed nearly the same plan as Madame Ancelot. Her characteristic traits and illustrative anecdotes are selected with equal tact, and she possesses the same talent of narration. She starts with the Princesse de Vaudemont, *née* Montmorency, *grande dame* to the tips of her fingers, although her face and figure ill qualified her for the part. She was not only short and red-faced, but plump and thin at the same time, that is, plump where she ought to be thin and thin where she ought to be plump. Yet she carried off all her physical disadvantages by dint of air, manner, and address. Superior to exclusiveness, she attracted and received merit and distinction of all kinds and classes, on the one condition of agreeability. She made a point of being at home every evening, giving up balls, plays, concerts, and evening engagements, for years; and if by a rare accident she dined out, she was punctually at home by nine; the visitors who preceded her being received in her absence by her *dame de compagnie*, Madame Leroy.

One of her most intimate friends was the Duchesse de Duras, who had resided in England during the emigration and there made the acquaintance of a tall stiff nobleman, Lord Claydfort, whom some of our readers may succeed in identifying by the following anecdote narrated by her. During the Queen's trial, he was on his way to the House of Lords, when his carriage was

stopped by the mob, and he was required to join in the cry of 'Long live the Queen!' 'With all my heart, my friends; long live Queen Caroline, and may your wives and daughters resemble her!'

Some good stories are told of Isabey, *à propos* of his *salon*. When the allied sovereigns met at Paris in 1815, he was commissioned to paint a picture of the Congress of Vienna, in which the whole of the members were to be introduced. 'Monsieur,' said the Duke of Wellington, 'I consent to appear in your picture solely on condition that I occupy the first place; it is mine, and I insist upon it.' 'My dear friend,' whispered Talleyrand, who represented France, 'for your sake and mine, I ought to occupy the first place in your picture or not appear in it at all.' How were these two pretensions to be reconciled? It must, notwithstanding, be done; and this is what the artist resolved on after the deepest reflection: 'The Duke was represented entering the chamber of conference, and all eyes were fixed upon him: he might, therefore, believe himself the king of the scene; whilst Prince Talleyrand, seated in the central chair, had thereby the place of honour in the picture. Besides, Isabey persuaded the noble Duke that he was much handsomer seen in profile, because he then resembled Henry IV.; which so adroitly flattered his Grace that he insisted absolutely on purchasing the sketch of this picture, which is now in England and ranks in the family of the noble lord as one of the most glorious memorials of his career.' Of the internal probability of this story, which we have translated literally, it is for our readers to judge.

A difficulty of an opposite description was raised by William Humboldt (the diplomate) who had no reason to pride himself on his good looks and was conscious of the fact. 'Look at me,' was his reply to Isabey's request for a sitting, 'and acknowledge that nature has given me so ugly a face that you cannot but approve

the law I have laid down, never to spend a halfpenny to preserve the likeness for posterity. Dame Nature would have too good a laugh at my expense on seeing me sit for my portrait; and to punish her for the shabby trick she has played me, I will never give her that pleasure.' Isabey did not despair, but simply requested Humboldt to allow him an hour's conversation the next morning. The request was granted, and when the picture appeared he exclaimed, 'I determined to pay nothing for my portrait, and the rogue of a painter has taken his revenge by making it like!'

There is a dressmaker at Paris, named Worth, who professes to imagine and compose dresses according to the genuine principles of art; to blend and harmonise form and colour like a painter, with a studied view to effect. It is an understood thing when he has produced a *chef-d'œuvre*, that the favoured customer is to give him a private view, to be adjusted and touched up. In this treatment of the living form like a lay figure, he was anticipated by Isabey, who, whenever his wife wished to be more than ordinarily smart, undertook in person the pleasing task of attiring her in this fashion:

'When Madame Isabey was completely dressed all but her robe or gown, and had got together a sufficient stock of silk, gauze and laces, she sent for her husband, who proceeded to cut, shape, and pin on till the costume was complete.' On one occasion, when cloth of gold and silver was the fashion, he made her a robe for a fancy ball with gold and silver paper pasted upon muslin, which, according to the chronicler, extorted the envy of many and the admiration of all. It should be added that everything became Madame Isabey, who was remarkably handsome.

Few women occupied a more distinguished position in the Parisian society of the last generation than the Comtesse Merlin. She had birth, wealth, and accomplishment, besides agreeable manners and a warm



heart. She was an amateur musician of the first class, and her concerts were of the highest excellence, for all the great composers and singers regarded her as a sister and put forth their utmost powers when she called upon them.

‘All the evenings (says Madame de Bassanville) were not consecrated to music. The arts, literature, science, even the futilities of the world, had their turn; but when I say futilities, I do not say sillinesses, for the intimate society of the countess included as many distinguished women as men of merit. To begin, there was the Princess Beljioso, patrician and plebeian combined; great lady and artist, uniting all the most opposite qualities, as if to show that, whether on the first or last rung of the world’s ladder, she would have been out of the line. The Duchesse de Plaisance was then aiming at rivalry with her, and one evening they were talking of the *salon* of Madame Merlin. “This *salon*,” said one of the ladies present, “is a regular collection; everything is represented in it; the arts, by Malibran and Rossini; literature, by Villemain; poetry, by Alfred de Musset; journalism, by MM. Malitorne and Merle.” “Beauty,” added Madame de Plaisance, eagerly, “by Mdle. de Saint-Aldegonde; wit, by Madame de Balby.” “And you, madame, what do you represent?” asked the Princess, with a bitter smile; for she thought herself entitled to two at least of the distinctions which were so lightly accorded to others. The Duchess, who reddened at this question, replied, naïvely, with a charming smile, “Mon Dieu, je ne sais pas—vertu, peut-être.” “Nous prenez-vous donc pour des masques?” rejoined the Princess.’

It was Madame Merlin who said, ‘J’aime fort les jeux innocens avec ceux qui ne le sont pas.’ Her games, innocent or the contrary, were intended to bring out the talent of her society, which abounded in talent. At a single game of forfeits, M. Villemain was condemned to make a speech, M. Berryer to tell a story, Alfred de Musset to improvise another, and Philippe Dupin to compose a history on a given subject, *La*

*Femme et le Chien*, on which he produced a charming one with a moral.

She proscribed politics, the more willingly because she was opposed to the liberal opinions in vogue; and she was fond of turning representative institutions into ridicule. Her favourite story on this subject ran thus :

‘ A colonist of St. Domingo, my respectable relative, had a mania for establishing a kind of domestic congress amongst his negroes. Everything was done by the plurality of votes, and, above all, they were recommended to vote according to their consciences. Nevertheless, the result was found to be always in accordance with the secret desire of the master. One day he took it into his head to establish a reform on several points of his administration. He proposed, in my presence, to these good people to decree that henceforth the offender that hitherto had been punished with five lashes, should receive seven; that they should have twenty-five rations instead of thirty; and, lastly, that a part of their allowance should be kept back for the benefit of certain half-castes, who had nothing and rested while the others worked. Well—who would believe it?—these propositions, so adverse to their interests, were adopted by a large majority.

“ What stupid creatures these blacks are ! ” I exclaimed, when I was alone with my relative.

“ Less than you think,” replied he. “ They have been playing a comedy for my amusement. *Voilà tout !* Do you not remark that I have reserved to myself the right of putting the questions and collecting the votes ? Well, that is the whole secret.” I comprehended at once; and yet this expedient, so simple, so easy, so natural, would never have occurred to me.’

It is an expedient that readily occurred to the framer of the Imperial system of representation.

Count D’Orsay is frequently named in connection with this *salon* and two or three others, in which he may have been seen during his flying visits to Paris prior to his final return. All French writers will have it that he was the king of fashion in England for

twenty years, and the following story is told in proof of his supremacy: 'The Count was returning from a steeplechase when he was caught in a storm. Looking round him, he observed a sailor wrapped up in a loose overcoat of coarse cloth reaching to his knees. "Will you sell your greatcoat?" said the Count, after tempting the sailor into a public-house by the offer of a dram. "Willingly, my lord," answered the sailor, pocketing the ten guineas offered him for a garment not worth one. The Count put it on, and rode into London. The storm had blown over, and he joined the riders in the Park, who all flocked around him with exclamation of "C'est original, c'est charmant! c'est délicieux! No one but D'Orsay would have thought of such a thing." The day following all the fashionables wore similar overcoats, and behold the invention of the paletot, which, like the tricolour, has made the tour of the world.'

The plain matter of fact is that D'Orsay was a very agreeable fellow, remarkable for social tact, good humour, and good sense. He exercised considerable influence in a particular set at a time when the autocrats of fashion had been dethroned or abdicated, and the lower empire had begun. When he came upon the stage, men were getting careless of dress, they were sick of affectation, and a second Brummel was an impossibility. D'Orsay had very few imitators, and his notoriety rested on his singularity. We say his notoriety; for those who knew him well had a real regard for him on account of his fineness of perception, his geniality, and his wit. The Earl of Norwich, who took the lead among the *beaux esprits* in the Court of Charles I., was voted a bore at the Restoration. A somewhat similar fate befell D'Orsay when he returned to France with Lady Blessington, in 1848.<sup>1</sup> His

<sup>1</sup> Lady Blessington's was one of the houses at which the ex-Emperor, then Prince Louis Napoleon, was most frequently received during his

countrymen would not or could not understand what the English had discovered in him. We happened to be with him at a large dinner, mostly made up of artistic, literary and political celebrities, when the conversation was directed to a topic on which he was admirably qualified to shine—the comparative merits of the English and French schools of painting. He talked his best and talked well, yet his failure was undeniable. He was quickly, almost contemptuously, put down.

The *salon* of the Comtesse de Rumfort is one of the most noteworthy recorded by Madame de Bassanville, but we can only find room for the sketch of one of her *habituées*, a female physician, a Yankee doctress, named Palmyra, who claimed an unbroken descent in the male line from Cortez, was pre-eminently beautiful, and appeared every day in the Tuileries gardens, between two hideous negresses who acted as foils. She only received patients of her own sex, and her fee for a consultation was more than treble what was commonly paid to the first regular physician in Paris :

‘What do you suppose was her prescription? Jalaps, potions, bleedings, purges, tonics, leeches? Nothing of the kind. All that might do for MM. Diafoirus, Desfonandres, or Purgon. She prescribed amusements, new dresses, *fêtes*, balls, garlands of flowers, pleasure trips.

‘She would say to one—“You are suffering from languor: you must go oftener to balls; I will teach you a new step.”

‘To another—“Your weak point is your nerves. Your husband must give you a new set of dresses. This gown does not become you. Write directly to your dressmaker.”

first residence in England; and on his being elected President, she expected to be received at the Elysée Bourbon. Eager as he always was to acknowledge obligations of the kind, he could not venture on such a step; but, one day, meeting her in the *Bois*, he stopped to salute her and unluckily put the common question: ‘How long does your ladyship propose to remain in Paris?’ ‘And you, Sire,’ was the ready retort; the point of which he remained long enough to blunt,

'To a third—"You are wasting away. Yes, I understand—a diamond necklace must be administered by your husband."

'To a fourth—"Your pulse, which I have just felt carefully, demands a new equipage."

'The fair patients went away delighted, and none of them regretted the fee of six crowns that was to cost the husband two or three thousand. What science! what a *coup d'œil*! what admirable therapeutics! Willingly would they have shouted out, "*Enfoncé, Hippocrate!*" as the romanticists shouted out at the commencement of the Revolution of 1830—" *Enfoncé Racine!*" It is not recorded that the husbands were equally satisfied; and I imagine the contrary, for Palmyra disappeared one fine morning, without any one knowing what had become of her.'

Madame de Bassanville has many more upon her list, which might be enlarged at discretion, for during most of the period of which she treats, almost every one with a large acquaintance and competent means took a day. To the best of our belief, based on personal knowledge, Alfred de Vigny conscientiously adhered to *his* for a full quarter of a century.

Social sway in France was at no time monopolised by Frenchwomen. The Russians were formidable competitors, especially the Princess Bagration, the Princess Lieven, and Madame Svetchine, whose *salon* exercised a marked influence on the religious movement of the age. The Americans were occasionally well represented, as by Mrs. Child, the daughter of General Henry Lee; and we remember when the best society were wont to meet in the *salon* of Madame Graham, the wife of a Scotch laird of moderate fortune.

We must turn to other sources than our two female reminiscents for the materials of a brief retrospect.

The *salons* of the seventeenth century have been rendered familiar to all conversant with modern French literature by M. Cousin, to whom it has been a labour

of love to portray, analyse and speculate on the lives and characters of their founders and illustrations. The results of his researches have been ably and pleasantly compressed by Madame Mohl :

‘ Of the distinguished ladies of the seventeenth century,’ she remarks, ‘ the Marquise de Rambouillet deserves the first place, not only as the earliest in the order of time, but because she first set on foot that long series of *salons* which for two hundred and fifty years have been a real institution, known only to modern civilisation. The general spirit of social intercourse that was afloat; the great improvement in the education of women of the higher classes; and, above all, the taste, not to say the passion, for their society, aided by the general prosperity under Henry IV., might indeed have created *salons*; but it is to Madame de Rambouillet’s individual qualities that we owe the moral stamp given to the society she founded, which, in spite of all the inferior imitations that appeared for long after, remains the precedent which has always been unconsciously followed.’

The famous Hotel, built after plans drawn by her, was situate in the Rue St. Thomas du Louvre, close to the Hôtel Longueville : both have been destroyed. It is described by Madame Scudéry as full of objects of art and curiosity. Around one room were the portraits of her most admired or cherished friends : a style of ornament which, prompted by the same kindly feeling and good taste, Frances Countess of Waldegrave has adopted with the happiest effect at Strawberry Hill.<sup>1</sup> The drawing-room of the Hotel, then called a *cabinet*

<sup>1</sup> At Strawberry Hill (not far from Reynolds’s masterpiece, the three Ladies Waldegrave) are portraits of the Duc and Duchesse d’Aumale, the Earl and Countess of Clarendon, Earl Russell, Earl Grey, the Marchioness of Clanricarde, the late Countess of Morley, Lord Lyndhurst, M. Van de Weyer, the Bishop of Winchester (Wilberforce), Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, the Duchess of Sutherland and the late Duchess, the Marchioness of Westminster, Lady Churchill, Lady Augusta Sturt, the late Countess of Shaftesbury, the late Marchioness of Northampton, Madame Alphonse de Rothschild, Lady Selina Bidwell, the Hon. Mrs. F. Stonor, and the Countess Spencer.

had windows opening from top to bottom on gardens reaching to the Tuileries. This room led into others, forming a suite, a fashion introduced by her, as was also that of perfuming them with baskets of flowers hung about.

The origin of the French Academy has been clearly traced to the coterie which met in this drawing-room; one of their favourite pursuits being the improvement of the language. 'Several words,' says Madame Mohl, 'were banished from conversation by the Marquise so completely that I could not venture even to quote them.' Judging from words that have kept their ground, the queen of the *Précieuses* might have banished a good many more without being accused of prudery. She was tall, handsome and dignified, with a marked expression of sweetness and benevolence. 'I loved her, I venerated her, I adored her. She was like no one else,' exclaims the Grande Mademoiselle. Her charm was inherited by her eldest daughter, Julie, who exercised a joint influence at the hotel, till she quitted it to marry the Marquis de Montausier; and three or four years afterwards, 1648, the intellectual intercourse of their circle was rudely interrupted by the Fronde.

Immediately after the cessation of political turmoil, Mademoiselle de Scudéry began her famous Saturday evenings, to which M. Cousin alludes in his account of her society:

'As at first nothing was thought of but harmless amusement, these assemblies were for a long time free from pedantry. The habitual conversation was easy and airy, tending to pleasantry; the women, like those of the Hôtel Rambouillet, were correct without prudery or primness; the men were gallant and attentive, and surrounded them with the graceful homage which distinguished the best manners of the time. A slight shade of tenderness was allowed, but passion was entirely forbidden. The greatest stretch of gallantry

was a certain semblance of Platonic love, and even this introduced now and then some slight jealousies.'

Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who has drawn her own intellectual portrait under the name of Sappho, was very plain and dark complexioned; a mortifying circumstance at a time when *blondes* were pre-eminently in vogue. But she had admirers in abundance, and her Platonic *liaison* with Péliisson is cited as a masterpiece of that much calumniated species of tie.<sup>1</sup> Describing it under her feigned name in the *Grand Cyrus*, she says:—

'Phaon's love increased with his happiness, and Sappho's affection became more tender from the knowledge of the great love he had for her. No hearts ever were so united, and never did love join so much purity to so much ardour. They told all their thoughts to each other; they even understood them without words; they saw in each other's eyes their whole hearts, and sentiments so tender, that the more they knew each other, the more entire was their love. Peace was not, however, so profoundly established as to let their affection grow dull or languid; for although they loved each other as much as it is possible to love, they complained each in turn that it was not enough.'

It must have been one of them who said of love that *trop* was never *assez*; and, despite their ugliness, they must have incurred frequent risk of verifying what Byron says of Platonics:

Oh, Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,  
With your confounded fantasies, to more  
Immoral conduct by the fancied sway  
Your system feigns o'er the controlless core  
Of human hearts, than all the long array  
Of poets and romancers—you're a bore,  
A charlatan, a coxcomb; and have been  
At best no better than a go-between.

Madame de Scudéry's Saturdays did not last above five years, and Madame Mohl states that her assemblies

<sup>1</sup> Péliisson was the man of whom Madame de Sévigné said '*qu'il abusoit du privilège dont jouissent les hommes d'être laids.*'



never acquired the importance of those of the Hôtel Rambouillet or of Madame de Sablé; nor of many that succeeded each other through the eighteenth century down to those of Madame Récamier.

The Marquise de Sablé to whom M. Cousin has devoted a volume, was the real successor to the Marquise de Rambouillet. She has been justly cited as one of the earliest instances of women, no longer young, rich, nor handsome, becoming more influential in the mellow evening of their lives than in the brilliant morning or the glowing noon. An admired beauty of the Court of Anne of Austria, she was a childless widow, past fifty, and without literary reputation, when her *salon* was at the height of its fame: when we find Mazarin noting down in his pocket-book the names of the personages of consideration that frequented it, concluding with this N.B.:—‘Madame de Longueville is very intimate with Madame de Sablé: they talk freely of everybody. I must get some one into her assemblies to tell me what they say.’

Richelieu had manifested the same anxiety to know what was going on at the Hôtel Rambouillet after he had left off visiting there. He sent his secretary, Boisrobert, to request the Marquise, as an act of friendship, to let him know who spoke against him; to which the spirited reply was that, as all her friends knew her respect for his eminence, none of them would be guilty of the ill-breeding of speaking against him in her house. So we see that Napoleon I. had high precedent in his favour when he took alarm at Madame de Staël’s sallies; and that the *espionnage* which has ruined social freedom, under the guise of saving society, under Napoleon III., is traditional.

Madame Mohl thinks that the maxims of La Rochefoucault were elaborated from the conversations at Madame de Sablé’s. They were certainly based on the selfish and intriguing men and women of the

Fronde. M. Cousin has satisfied himself that the *Pensées de Pascal*, were suggested by these conversations. Madame Mohl also claims for these ladies the credit of having been the first to recognise the claims of men of letters to be received on a footing of equality with the great.

‘It was this sympathy of women that so early made literary men an important portion of society in France; but in what other country would women have had the power of conferring such importance? Among the anecdotes preserved of the Hôtel Rambouillet is one relating that the grand Condé, being angry at Voiture, one of its greatest favourites, said, “If he was one of us, we should not put up with such behaviour.”’

Is this a proof of social equality? We draw the opposite inference from the anecdote; and remembering Voltaire’s treatment at the hands of one of the privileged class, who had him caned, we are reluctantly led to conclude that men of letters or of purely personal distinction, not born in the purple, were not received on a footing of conventional equality till shortly before the Revolution of 1789.

A tolerably correct notion of the state of Parisian society when this crisis was in preparation, may be collected from *Julien, ou la Fin d’un Siècle* by M. Bungenet. ‘Serious topics were too anxiously discussed to admit of light, discursive, or literary talk. Some salons, however, endeavoured to preserve in some degree the traditions of their superannuated predecessors. Madame Geoffrin was dead, Madame du Deffant retained but a smaller number of faithful adherents. It was at the Princess de Beauvan’s, the Duchess de Grammont’s, the Duchess d’Anville’s, the Countess de Tessi’s, the Countess de Ségur’s, Madame de Beauharnais’, Madame de Montesson’s, that the French world assembled its wittiest and most cultivated representatives. Madame de Luxembourg, widow of the Mar-

shal, must be added to the list. It was a select circle of her friends that Rousseau gratified with the first reading of the *Confessions*; and by a strange coincidence he began the very day after the death of Voltaire.

Having brought down the series of Parisian *salons* to about the point where Mesdames de Bassanville and Ancelot take them up, we look round to see whether the institution, as we venture to call it, has been imitated or acclimatised out of France. Goethe at Weimar, and Tieck at Dresden, were the centres of very remarkable circles, which will fill a large space in the history of German society and thought. It would appear from Gentz's *Diaries* that female influence was rife at Vienna during the Congress. But the German *salon* that best satisfied the conditions which we assumed at starting, is that of the celebrated Rahel, the wife of Varnhagen von Ense, who has thus recorded his impression of her at their first meeting :

'She appeared, a light, graceful figure, small but well-formed; her foot and hand surprisingly small; the brow, with its rich braids of dark hair, announced intellectual superiority; the quick and yet firm dark glances caused a doubt whether they betrayed or took in most; a suffering expression lent a winning softness to the well-defined features. She moved about in her dark dress almost like a shadow, but with a free and sure step. What, however, overcame me most was her ringing, sweet, and soul-reaching voice, and the most wonderful mode of speaking that I had ever met.'

This was in 1803. She was not married till 1814, when she was about forty-four, and he thirty. She was of a Jewish family, named Levin, and her position was due entirely to her own strength of character, to her intellectual superiority, and (above all) to her power of entering into the feelings of others, to her being emphatically *simpatica*. Several chapters in books and some separate publications have been de-

voted to her. Both before and after her marriage we find her surrounded by such men as Frederic Schlegel, Gentz, Prince Radzivill, Humboldt, Prince Püchler Muskau, Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, and Gans. It was to her that Gentz addressed the curious letters describing the growth and restorative effects of his passion for Fanny Elssler. Madame de Staël's impression after a first interview was characteristically expressed to Baron Brinkman: '*Elle est étonnante. Vous êtes bien heureux de posséder ici une telle génie. Vous me communiquerez ce qu'elle dira de moi.*'

Rahel died in 1833. M. de Sternberg, referring to a later period, says: 'I have done with my Berlin *salons*. The real founder of the modern *salons* of Berlin is still living, but without a *salon*. It is Varnhagen von Ense, who, in conjunction with or rather as the literary and diplomatic support of Rahel, founded every kind of intellectual sociability, and their example was followed by many others, both men and women. It may be said that German life caught from them the first notion of a *salon* in the sense in which it had long existed in France. North-German and especially Berlin life was adverse to the firm establishment and further development of this kind of intercourse.'<sup>1</sup>

The most influential and popular *salon* of which Italy could boast at any period was that of the Countess of Albany at Florence. All travellers make honourable mention of it; and she has been truly described as the connecting link of half a century of celebrities.

A very remarkable circle, commemorated by Byron, Hobhouse (Lord Broughton) and Beyle, who were temporarily amongst its most distinguished members, collected at Milan round the Abate de Breme shortly after the peace of 1816; but their principal place of meeting was the opera. Writing in 1823, Lord Byron

<sup>1</sup> *Erinnerungsblätter*, Dritter Theil, p. 24.

says:—‘So many changes have taken place in the Milan circle that I hardly dare recur to it: some dead, some banished, and some in the Austrian dungeons.’ Lord Broughton speaks in the same tone in his *Italy*: ‘I passed through Milan in 1822. All my friends of the Liberal party had disappeared.’

Writing from Venice, Byron says: ‘The Contessa Albrizzi is the De Staël of Venice, not young, but a very learned, unaffected, good-natured woman, very polite to strangers, and I believe not at all dissolute, as most of the women are.’ Lord Broughton states that, at his first visit to Venice, only two or three houses were open to respectable recommendations, and at his last visit, only one. Houses might be named in both Naples and Rome which have largely promoted the best sort of social intercourse, but the want of duration, regularity, and continuity disentitles them to rank with those which are popularly accepted as *salons*. The same remark applies, with few exceptions, to the society which has occasionally clustered or crystallised in Geneva and its vicinity. We must except Sismondi’s, the historian, whose villa during many years formed the grand attraction of a locality with which so many recollections of genius are imperishably associated. We must also except Coppet, and hope, with Lord Broughton, that some one might be found ‘not to celebrate but describe the amiable mistress of an open mansion, the centre of a society, ever varied, and always pleased, the creator of which, divested of the ambition and the arts of public rivalry, shone forth only to give fresh animation to those around her.’ At Geneva, as indeed in every continental capital, the political state at present (1866) is enough to account for the absence or decline of the *salon*.

M. de Lamartine, who has devoted two eloquent and interesting Numbers of his *Cours de Littérature* to Madame de Récamier and Chateaubriand, concludes

with this paragraph:—‘To return to our literary *salons*—they are throughout the sign of an exuberant civilization: they are also the sign of the happy influence of women on the human mind. From Pericles and Socrates at Aspasia’s, from Michael Angelo and Raphael at Vittoria Colonna’s, from Ariosto and Tasso at Eleonora d’Este’s, from Petrarch at Laura de Sade’s, from Bossuet and Racine at the Hotel Rambouillet,<sup>1</sup> from Voltaire at Madame du Deffant’s or Madame du Chatelet’s, from J. J. Rousseau at Madame d’Epinay’s or Madame de Luxembourg’s, from Vergniaud at Madame Roland’s, from Chateaubriand at Madame Récamier’s;—everywhere it is from the fireside (*coin du feu*) of a lettered, political, or enthusiastic woman that an age is lighted up or an eloquence bursts forth. Always a woman—as the nurse of genius, at the cradle of literature! When these *salons* are closed, I dread civil storms or literary decline. They are closed.’

‘The clubs in England and the *salons* in France,’ remarks Madame Mohl, ‘have long been places where, like the porticoes of Athens, public affairs have been discussed and public men criticised.’ This is the key to the problem why clubs are flourishing in England, and *salons* are dying out in France. We can discuss public affairs freely, and our neighbours cannot. A literary man of the highest distinction (M. Jules Simon) who (1866) has a weekly reception at his house, having been summoned to appear as a witness before the Tribunal of Police Correctionnelle, discovered from the tone and course of the examination, that much of the conversation at his last soirée had been faithfully reported to the magistrate. A single occurrence of this kind creates an all-pervading feeling of distrust. Yet

<sup>1</sup> This is a strange anachronism. Racine (born in 1639) was a child when the Hôtel Rambouillet was in its glory; and Bossuet was born in 1627.

Madame de C.'s<sup>1</sup> *salon*, the last of the *foyers éteints*, retained its reputation and attractiveness till her lamented death. Madame d'A. holds on gallantly. A well-known *rez-de-chaussée* (M. Thiers's) in the Place St. Georges is the nightly scene of about the best conversation in Paris; and a small apartment (Madame Mohl's) in the Rue du Bac is still redolent of the social and intellectual charm which made Madame de Staël prefer the gutter of that street to the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone or the calm waters which reflect the rocks of Meilleraye.

The expansion of Paris, and increased facilities of locomotion, are also thought to have accelerated the decline of the *salon*, which thrived best when the higher class of Parisians lived most of the year in close proximity and were seldom long or far absent from the capital. When Madame Merlin left Paris, it was only for a villa at St. Germain's, where she had dinners and receptions every Sunday and Wednesday.

The state of things is still more unfavourable to constant intimacy in London; no longer the London of Brummel, bounded on the south by Pall Mall, on the north by Oxford Street, on the east by Regent Street, on the west by Park Lane. English country life, and the national fondness for travelling, form another serious drawback. The *élite* of our society are not settled in the metropolis till the spring is far advanced, and are off again soon after midsummer. The late dinner-hour and the importance we attach to this (in many men's estimate) most important event of the day, with the club to fall back upon, lead us to undervalue the privileged access to the drawing-room, which is pretty sure to be empty till that part of the evening which the French *salon* occupied has passed away. Nor are we aware that any qualified Englishwoman has ever submitted to the sacrifice required for a fair

<sup>1</sup> The Countess de Circourt.

trial of the experiment, by a self-denying ordinance like that to which, as we have seen, the Princess de Vaudemont submitted for thirty years. But there is an accomplished lady of rank still living who (confined to her house by ill health) is at home every evening to a privileged circle, and presents in her own person an illustration of the brilliant and varied conversation which was the pride of the Parisian *salon* in the olden time.

The next nearest approximation was made by the Berrys, whose habits had been formed or modified abroad. 'With the lives of the sisters,' remarks their thoughtful and refined biographer, Lady Theresa Lewis, 'closed a society which will be ever remembered by all who frequented these pleasant little gatherings in Curzon Street. Sometimes a note, sometimes a word, and more often the lamp being lighted over the door, was taken as notice to attend, and on entering it might be to find only a few *habitués* or a larger and more brilliant assembly.' But a notice of some sort, if not a formal invitation, was necessary to insure against disappointment; and this is the touchstone or turning-point.

A glance at the 'Queens of Society' will suggest a proud array of distinguished Englishwomen who have done good service in blending, harmonising and elevating society: in associating genius, learning, and accomplishment with rank, wealth, and fashion: in facilitating, refining, and enhancing the pleasures of intellectual intimacy. But not one of them has set about her appointed task in the manner of a Frenchwoman: not one of them, in fact, has successfully attempted the institution of the *salon*. A few, Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Palmerston, for example, may have done more, may have done better, but they have not done this. Nor could even they, with all their rare combination of attractions and advantages, have attained the proposed object without first revolution-



ising the ingrained habits of the nation. Yet, although the *salon* has little chance in England, and is at a temporary discount on the Continent, we do not despair of its future. It is too congenial to its native soil to be exterminated or die out. It faded with the free institutions of France : it will revive with her reviving liberties.

## WHIST AND WHIST-PLAYERS.

(FROM FRAZER'S MAGAZINE FOR APRIL, 1869.)

1. *The Laws of Short Whist*. Edited by J. L. Baldwin ; and *A Treatise on the Game*. By J. C. (James Clay). London : 1866.
2. *The Laws and Principles of Whist, &c.* By Cavendish (Jones). Ninth Edition. London : 1868.
3. *Short Whist*. By Major A. The Eighteenth Edition. Newly Edited, &c. By Professor P. (Pole). London : 1865.
4. *The Theory of the Modern Scientific Game of Whist*. By William Pole, F.R.S., Mus. Doc. Oxon. Reprinted from the Revised Edition of *Short Whist* by Major A. London : 1870.
5. *The Whist-Player, &c.* By Lieut.-Colonel B \* \* \* \* (Blyth). Third Edition. London : 1866.
6. *Traité du Whist*. Par M. Deschapelles. Paris : 1840.
7. *Le Whist rendu facile, etc.* Par un Amateur. 2me édition. Paris : 1855.

THE laws of whist, like those of Nature before Newton, lay hid in night, at all events were involved in most perplexing confusion and uncertainty, when the happy thought of fixing, defining, arranging and (so to speak) codifying them, occurred to a gentleman possessing the requisite amount of knowledge and experience, and admirably qualified by social position for the task. 'Some years ago,' writes Mr. Baldwin in May, 1864, 'I suggested to the late Hon. George Anson (one of the most accomplished whist-players of his day) that, as the supremacy of short whist was an acknowledged fact, a revision and reformation of Hoyle's

rules would confer a boon on whist-players generally, and on those especially to whom disputes and doubtful points were constantly referred. Our views coincided, but the project was, for the following reason, abandoned.'

The reason was neither more nor less than what has stopped or indefinitely postponed so many other projects for the amelioration of society or improvement of mankind, namely, the difficulty and trouble to be encountered, with a very uncertain chance of success. This reason was eventually outweighed by the sense of responsibility in the face of a steadily increasing evil which a decided effort might correct; and early in 1863 the legislator of the whist-table had duly meditated his scheme and made up his mind as to the right method of executing it. When Napoleon had resolved upon a code, he began by nominating a board of the most eminent French jurists, whose sittings he was in the constant habit of attending, and by whom it was, article by article, settled and discussed. Mr. Baldwin proceeded in much the same fashion. The board or committee which met at his suggestion, or (as he says) 'kindly consented to co-operate with him,' was comprised of seven members of the Arlington (now Turf) Club, who—we might take for granted, were it not notorious as a fact—were renowned for the skilful practice as well as the scientific knowledge of the game.

The foundation of the republic of Venice may be dated from 697 A.D., when twelve of the founders met and elected the first Doge. Their descendants, *gli Elettorali*, formed the first class of the aristocracy, and with them were subsequently associated the descendants of the four who joined in signing an instrument for the foundation of the Abbey of San Giorgio Maggiore. The twelve were popularly spoken of as the Twelve Apostles, and the four as the Four Evangelists. The foundation of the republic of whist may be dated

from its reduction under settled laws: and precedence, such as was accorded to the Venetian Apostles and Evangelists, should be accorded to the two bodies of gentlemen by whom Mr. Baldwin's suggestions were so effectively carried out. The seven members of the Arlington (who may rank with the Apostles) were:—George Bentinck, Esq., M.P. for West Norfolk; the late John Bushe, Esq. (son of the Chief Justice of 'Patronage'); James Clay, Esq., M. P., who acted as chairman; the late Charles C. Greville, Esq.; Sir Rainald Knightley, Bart., M.P.; H. B. Mayne, Esq.; G. Payne, Esq.; the late Colonel Pipon. The resolution appointing them is authenticated by the distinguished signature of Admiral Rous. The code drawn up by them was transmitted to the Portland Club (the whist-club *par éminence* since the dissolution of Graham's) which nominated the following committee (who may rank with the Evangelists of Venice) to consider it:—H. D. Jones, Esq. (the father of 'Cavendish') chairman; Charles Adams, Esq.; W. F. Baring, Esq.; H. Fitzroy, Esq.; Samuel Petrie, Esq.; H. M. Riddell, Esq.; R. Wheble, Esq. Their suggestions and additions were immediately accepted by the Arlington, and on Saturday, April 30, 1864—it is right to be particular—this resolution was proposed and carried unanimously:

'Arlington Club.

'That the Laws of Short Whist, as framed by the Whist Committee and edited by John Loraine Baldwin, Esq., be adopted by this Club.'

(Signed) 'BEAUFORT, Chairman.'

So soon as this resolution was passed, the work was done; for all the other principal clubs in town and country eagerly notified their adhesion, and it would be simply absurd for individuals to refuse obedience. That the Continent and the New World will do well to follow the lead of England, may be inferred from a single point of comparison. Mr. Baldwin's Laws of

Whist are comprised in sixteen pages, whereas 284 pages of M. Deschapelles' *Traité du Whist* are devoted to the Laws. Nor is the code the only boon for which we are indebted to the codifier; he has also been the means of eliciting what (when first published) was incomparably the most acute, most compact, and most practical essay on the subject: *A Treatise on the Game*, by J. C. (James Clay). It was preceded by several works of merit, but its improving effects may be traced in all recent editions of the best; and we have now a literature of whist which leaves the habitually bad player, male or female, without the semblance of an apology.

Although the large circulation of these books would imply general study and corresponding advance, the effect has been disappointing on the whole. It is quite curious to see how many who have made whist their favourite occupation never rise to the rank of third-rate players: how many are utterly ignorant of the plainest principles, or unprepared for the most ordinary combinations or contingencies: how many are almost always in hopeless confusion about their leads: how many have not the smallest notion why and when they should trump a doubtful card, or why and when they should lead trumps. The Italian who had the honour of teaching George III. the violin, on being asked by his royal pupil what progress he was making, observed, 'Please your Majesty, there are three classes of players: 1, those who cannot play at all; 2, those who play badly; 3, those who play well. Your Majesty is just rising into the second class.' This is the outside compliment we could pay to a numerous section of assiduous whist-players. Yet, as Lord Chesterfield told his son, whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well; and one would have thought that a few hours' study might be advantageously bestowed in escaping this constantly recurring condition of embarrassment, to say nothing of the annoyance which may be read in

the partner's face, however indulgent or well-bred, when he or she happens to know something of the game.

This want of proper grounding and training, far from being confined to the idle and superficial, is frequently detected or avowed in the higher orders of intellect, in the most accomplished and cultivated minds. 'Lady Donegal and I,' writes Miss Berry, 'played whist with Lord Ellenborough and Lord Erskine; I doubt which of the four plays worst.' Lord Thurlow declared late in life that he would give half his fortune to play well. Why did he not set about it? Lord Lyndhurst and Lord Wensleydale were on a par with Lord Ellenborough and Lord Erskine, yet they were both very fond of the game, and both would eagerly have confirmed the justice of Talleyrand's well-known remark to the youngster who rather boastingly declared his ignorance of it: '*Quelle triste vieillesse vous vous préparez!*'<sup>1</sup> It is an invaluable resource to men of studious habits, whose eyes and mental faculties equally require relief in the evening of life or after the grave labours of the day; and the interest rises with the growing consciousness of skill.

The main cause of this educational omission or neglect is the rooted belief that whist cannot be taught by study or reading, which is pretty nearly tantamount to saying that it cannot be taught at all; for there is no reason why a sound precept, orally communicated at a card-table, should be less sound and useful when printed in a book. Moreover, the book has one marked advantage over the oral instructor: it gives time for reflection, and does not give occasion for

<sup>1</sup> To Talleyrand at the whist-table might be applied, with the change of a word, the couplet of Pope:

'See how the world its veterans rewards,  
A youth of plotting, an old age of cards.'

Talleyrand was far from a good player, and, as might have been anticipated, unduly prone to finessing and false cards.

irritability. We have no elementary schools of whist, nor paid teachers as in billiards; and a competent amateur, when taking his place opposite a lady 'partner, is almost invariably addressed: 'Now pray don't scold; I can't bear scolding.' In other words: 'I can't bear to be taught.' Even when a lady requests to be told if she plays wrong, the odds are that, unless she is resolutely bent on fascinating, she will turn upon you, if you are simple enough to take her at her word, like the matron in *Cælebs* who was lamenting her own exceeding sinfulness—

'*Mr. Ranby*: You accuse yourself too heavily, my dear; you have sins to be sure.

'*Mrs. Ranby* (in a raised voice and angry tone): And pray what sins have I, *Mr. Ranby*?'

A critical remark to a male partner, or an attempt to talk over the hand, is frequently met in a manner that does not invite a repetition of the experiment, although a polite inquiry why a particular card was played is an implied compliment. General de Vautré, the author of *Le Génie de Whist*, complained that more than one of his friends declined playing with him, saying: 'If I am your partner I get scolded, and if I am your adversary I lose.' *Mr. Clay* speaks with his characteristic good sense on this topic:

'Talking over the hand after it has been played is not uncommonly called a bad habit, and an annoyance. I am firmly persuaded that it is among the readiest ways of learning whist, and I advise beginners, when they have not understood their partner's play, or when they think that the hand might have been differently played with a better result, to ask for information, and invite discussion. They will, of course, select for this purpose a player of recognised skill, and will have little difficulty in distinguishing the dispassionate and reasoning man from him who judges by results, and finds fault only because things have gone

wrong. They will rarely find a real whist-player so discourteous as to refuse every information in his power, for he takes interest in the beginner who is anxious to improve.'

But real whist-players will rarely take sufficient interest in beginners, however anxious to improve, to be willing to cut in with them before a certain amount of progress has been made; and a request for information, betraying a want of elementary knowledge, might provoke an answer like Dr. Johnson's to the young gentleman who asked him whether the cat was oviparous or viviparous: 'Sir, you should read the common books of natural history, and not come to a man of a certain age and some attainments to ask whether the cat lays eggs.' With reference, also, to your own immediate interest, you had better hold your tongue, or reserve your comments till the party has broken up; for the offender will probably play worse.

Books, therefore, are the readiest and surest sources of instruction, but to begin with books would be as absurd as the practice of teaching Latin and Greek through the medium of a Latin grammar. It is now admitted that the Hamiltonian method of learning languages is the best. Acquire a sufficient stock of words before meddling with syntax. Just so familiarise yourself with the ordinary combinations of the cards before venturing on the rules and principles which constitute the syntax of the game. But in each case the syntax is indispensable when the appropriate stage of progress has been reached; and the whist-player who endeavours to dispense with it, unless he is singularly gifted, will bear the same relation to one of the master spirits of the Portland, the turf, or the Paris Jockey Club, that a courier or quick-witted lady's maid who had made the tour of Europe, would bear in linguistic acquirements to the trained diplomatist who speaks and writes French, German, and Italian, with correctness and facility.

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It is the same in all things to which mind can be applied: theory or science should go hand in hand with practice. This is true even of games of manual dexterity, like billiards and croquet, but it is pre-eminently true of whist. Nay, we shall show before concluding that the merely mechanical quality of memory has far less to do with making a fine, or even a good player, than the higher qualities of judgment, observation, logical intuition, and sagacity.

The introduction of short whist is thus described by Mr. Clay:

‘Some eighty years back, Lord Peterborough having one night lost a large sum of money, the friends with whom he was playing proposed to make the game five points instead of ten, in order to give the loser a chance, at a quicker game, of recovering his loss. The late Mr. Hoare, of Bath, a very good whist-player, and without a superior at piquet, was one of this party, and has more than once told me the story.’

Major A., writing in 1835, says:

“Short whist started up and overthrew the Long Dynasty more than half a century ago,” thus confirming Mr. Clay as to the date; but if it started up in the eighteenth century its supremacy was not established till far into the nineteenth, and many whist-players now living imbibed their rudiments under the ancient Long Dynasty.’

An illustration in the *Antijacobin* of 1798 goes far to prove that long whist alone was present to the minds of the distinguished writers, Mr. Canning and Mr. Frere:

Of whist or cribbage mark th’ amusing game,  
The partners changing, but the sport the same;  
Else would the gamester’s anxious ardour cool,  
Dull every deal, and stagnant every pool.  
—Yet must *one* Man, with one unceasing Wife,  
Play the Long Rubber of connubial life.

The authorities differ as to the origin of the short game:

‘This revolution,’ continues Major A., ‘was occasioned by a worthy Welsh baronet preferring his lobster for supper hot. Four first-rate whist-players—consequently, four great men—adjourned from the House of Commons to Brookes’s, and proposed a rubber while the cook was busy. “The lobster must be hot,” said the baronet. “A rubber may last an hour,” said another, “and the lobster be cold again, or spoiled, before we have finished.” “It is too long,” said a third. “Let us cut it shorter,” said a fourth.—Carried, *nem. con.* Down they sat, and found it very lively to win or lose so much quicker. Besides furnishing conversation at supper, the thing was new—they were legislators, and had a fine opportunity to exercise their calling.’

Next day (he adds) St. James’s Street was in commotion: the Longs and Shorts contended like the Blues and Greens of the circus: and for a period it was regarded as a drawn battle or a tolerably equal contest; but the old school became gradually weaker by deaths, and the new school, when no longer confronted by habit and prejudice, obtained a complete victory. The truth is, the new game is the better of the two as requiring more sustained attention, more rapidity of conception, more dash, more *élan*, and giving more scope to genius than the old. It is the Napoleonic strategy or tactics against the Austrian or (to borrow an illustration from naval warfare) it may be compared to Nelson’s favourite manœuvre of ‘breaking the line.’ Those who maintain the contrary, must maintain that the second half of the old game (when it stood five to five) was less critical and less calculated for the display of skill than the first. At all events, the popular decree is irrevocable, and the revolution has been rendered more complete by circumstances which are appositely stated by Mr. Clay:

‘I remember, as a youngster, being told by one of the highest authorities, on the occasion of my having led a

single trump from a hand of great strength in all the other suits, that the only justification for leading a singleton in trumps was the holding at least ace and king in the three remaining suits. He spoke the opinion of his school. That school, I am inclined to believe, might teach us much that we have neglected, but I should pick out of it one man alone, the celebrated Major Aubrey, as likely to be very formidable among the best players of the present day. He was a player of great original genius, and refused strict adherence to the over careful system, to which his companions were slaves.

‘But whist had travelled, and thirty or more years ago we began to hear of the great Paris whist-players. They sometimes came among us—more frequently our champions encountered them on their own ground, and returned to us with a system modified, if not improved, by their French experience. . . . We were forced to recognise a wide difference between their system and our own, and “the French game” became the scorn and the horror of the old school, which went gradually to its grave with an unchanged faith, and in the firm belief that the invaders, with their rash trump leading, were all mad, and that their great master, Deschappelles—the finest whist-player beyond any comparison the world has ever seen—was a dangerous lunatic. The new school, however, as I well remember, were found to be winning players.’

Now what are the distinctive features of the new school, its essential principles, its merits, and its defects? Unluckily, the great master, Deschappelles, did not live to carry out his original plan. He has left only a single chapter on *La Doctrine*, entitled *De l'Impasse* (Of the Finesse). But his mantle has fallen on no unworthy successors, and little difficulty will be experienced in rendering his system intelligible to those who care to master it, for it is substantially that which all the best players in both hemispheres have adopted and recommended :

‘The basis of the theory of the modern scientific game of

whist (says Dr. Pole) lies in the relations existing between the players.

‘It is a fundamental feature of the construction of the game, that the four players are intended to act, not singly and independently, but in a double combination, two of them being *partners* against a partnership of the other two. And it is the full recognition of this fact, carried out into all the ramifications of the play, which characterises the scientific game, and gives it its superiority over all others.

‘Yet, obvious as this fact is, it is astonishing how imperfectly it is appreciated among players generally. Some ignore the partnership altogether, except in the mere division of the stakes, neither caring to help their partners or be helped by them, but playing as if each had to fight his battle alone. Others will go farther, giving *some* degree of consideration to the partner, but still always making their own hand the chief object; and among this latter class are often found players of much skill and judgment, and who pass for great adepts in the game.

‘The scientific theory, however, goes much farther. It carries out the community of interests to the fullest extent possible. It forbids the player to consider his own hand apart from that of his partner, but commands him to treat both in strict conjunction, teaching him, in fact, to play the two hands combined as if they were one.’

The combined principle was not ignored, it was simply undervalued, by the old school. What they failed to see, and what many modern players cannot be brought to see yet, is that, with tolerably equal cards, the result of the mimic campaign hangs upon it, as the fate of Germany hung on the junction of Prince Charles and the Crown Prince at Sadowa, or the fate of Europe on the junction of Blucher and Wellington at Waterloo. Of course it is necessary to agree upon a common object or system, and this again is placed in the clearest light by Dr. Pole:

‘The object of play is of course to make tricks, and tricks may be made in four different ways: viz.

' 1. By the natural predominance of *master cards*, as aces and kings. This forms the leading idea of beginners, whose notions of trick-making do not usually extend beyond the high cards they have happened to receive.

' 2. Tricks may be also made by taking advantage of the *position* of the cards, so as to evade the higher ones, and make smaller ones win; as, for example, in finessing, and in leading up to a weak suit. This method is one which, although always kept well in view by good players, is yet only of accidental occurrence, and therefore does not enter into our present discussion of the general systems of treating the hand.

' 3. Another mode of trick-making is by *trumping*; a system almost as fascinating to beginners as the realisation of master cards; but the correction of this predilection requires much deeper study.

' 4. The fourth method of making tricks is by establishing and bringing in a *long suit*, every card of which will then make a trick, whatever be its value. This method, though the most scientific, is the least obvious, and therefore is the least practised by young players.

' Now the first, third, and fourth methods of making tricks may be said to constitute different *systems*, according to either of which a player may view his hand and regulate his play.'

This is illustrated by an example. The hand of the player with whom the opening lead lies, is thus composed: *Hearts* (trumps), queen, nine, six, three. *Spades*, king, knave, eight, four, three, two. *Diamonds*, ace, king. *Clubs*, a singleton. He may lead off the ace and king of diamonds (System No. 1); or the singleton in the hope of a ruff (No. 3); or the smallest of his long suit (No. 4) on the chance of establishing it and making three or four tricks in it. In other words, he has to choose between the three systems; and the paramount importance of the choice consists in its deciding the opening lead, by far the most important of the whole; as it is the first indication afforded to the partner. 'He will, if he is a good player, observe

with great attention the card you lead, and will at once draw inferences from it that may perhaps influence the whole of his plans.'

When the highest authorities, on the most careful calculation of chances, have laid down that the long suit system is the best, and the long suit opening has become the received method of carrying it out, a player who takes his own line, or looks exclusively to his own hand, will wilfully commit what Mr. Clay justly calls 'the greatest fault he knows in a whist-player.' All that can be said in favour of the rival systems has been said a hundred times and deliberately set aside, but the strongest of all objections to each of them is, that neither admits of combined action, in fact, can hardly be called a system at all; for when you have led off your ace and king, you are at a standstill; and when you have led your singleton, you have probably embarrassed instead of informing your partner; and it is fortunate if you have not led him into a scrape. Besides, you may have no ace and king, and no singleton; whereas you must always have what (comparatively speaking) may be called your strong suit, if only consisting of four.<sup>1</sup>

Players who find an irresistible fascination in leading their best cards, or in trumping, may also take comfort in the reflection that they are not requested to abandon their favourite tactics altogether; for occasions are constantly arising when it becomes advisable to fall back upon them; just as the most consummate general may be compelled to resort to defensive or guerilla warfare, when he is too weak to hazard a pitched battle

<sup>1</sup> The principle of leading from the long suit is by no means universally admitted in France, and was formerly much contested in England. Colonel Anson pronounced it the height of bad play to lead from a suit in which you had nothing higher than a ten, if you had a suit with an honour to lead from; unless, from strength in trumps, there was a probability of bringing in the small cards. Another moot point is, whether you should carry out the principle if your only four suit happened to be trumps, and you have no good cards in the other suits.

or a siege in form. It can hardly ever be right to lead off an ace and king with no other of the suit, for they are almost sure of making at a more opportune period of the game. But when held with others in an otherwise weak hand, *i.e.*, without strength in trumps or the chance of establishing a suit, high cards may be judiciously led at once to avoid their being trumped. Whenever, therefore, a good player plays out his winning cards, without first playing trumps, it is a manifest token of weakness instead of an exhibition of strength.

The argument is thus summed up by Dr. Pole :

‘Accepting, therefore, this system as the preferable one, we are now able to enunciate the fundamental theory of the modern scientific game, which is—

‘That the hands of the two partners shall not be played singly and independently, but shall be combined, and treated as one. And that in order to carry out most effectually this principle of combination, each partner shall adopt the long suit system as the general basis of his play.’

Mark the words ‘general basis.’ This is quite enough to bring about the required understanding, and you are at full liberty to adapt your play to circumstances when your partner makes no distinct call upon you, or is unable to co-operate in the execution of a plan.

Dr. Pole, my partner and first player, leads a small card of a suit (say hearts) in which I am very weak. I am strong in two other suits, and tolerably strong (say four, with a high honour) in trumps. As soon as I get the lead, in full confidence that he is numerically strong in hearts, I lead a trump. But what am I to do if I have a partner who is in the habit of leading a singleton, or from a two suit, with a view to trumping, or who does so often enough to justify distrust?

It is an obvious corollary that the primary use of

trumps is to draw the adversary's trumps for the purpose of bringing in your own or your partner's long suit; and it is consequently essential to determine what strength in trumps justifies you in leading them. There is a capital sketch of a whist party in 'Sans Merci,' by the author of 'Guy Livingston,' in which the hero, who is losing to a startling amount, asks his partner, an old hand, whether with knave five he ought not to have led trumps. 'It has been computed,' was the calm reply, 'that eleven thousand Englishmen, once heirs to fair fortunes, are wandering about the Continent, in a state of utter destitution, because they would not lead trumps with five and an honour in their hands.' Professor Pole is distinct and positive on this point:

'Whenever you have five trumps, *whatever they are*, or whatever the other components of your hand, you should lead them; for the probability is that three, or at most four, rounds will exhaust those of the adversaries, and you will still have one or two left to bring in your own or your partner's long suits, and to stop those of the enemy. . . . And, further, you must recollect that it is no argument against leading trumps from five, that you have no long suit, and that your hand is otherwise weak; for it is the essence of the combined principle that you work for your partner as well as yourself, and the probability is that if you are weak, *he* is strong, and will have long suits or good cards to bring in. And if, unfortunately, it should happen that you are both weak, any other play would be probably still worse for you.'

Cavendish says that, with the original lead and five trumps, you should almost always lead one; with six, invariably. Colonel Blyth, after giving the same qualified opinion in his text, adds in a note: 'I once heard a first-rate whist-player say that, with four trumps in your hand, it was mostly right to lead them; but that he who held five and did not lead them, was fit only for a lunatic asylum.' This first-rate whist-player had probably recently been playing with one of the eleven



thousand, or with strong-minded females who are most provokingly reticent of trumps. We should recommend every incipient whist-player, who has not experience enough to mark the rare exceptional cases, to lead one when he holds more than four, but to pause and reflect with four. With less than five, or strength enough to ensure the command, trumps should not be led, unless it is obviously advantageous to get them out. It is obviously advantageous when you or your partner have good cards to make, and obviously disadvantageous when you have not. If there are two or more honours amongst your four, or the ace, you may lead one with comparatively little risk.

The smallest should be led from four or more, except when you lead from a sequence of three, or except when you have king, knave, ten, with others, when the received lead is the ten.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Clay has laid down *nem. con.* (at least *nem. con.* amongst the received authorities) that with ace, king, and other small trumps, you should lead the lowest, unless you have more than six, *i.e.*, as an original lead, or before circumstances have called for two rounds certain. The reason is that you may otherwise lose the third and most important trick; for if you have no more than six, the odds are that one of your adversaries has at least three, headed by a superior card to your third best. The odds are also in favour of your partner holding the queen or knave, and if the queen is on his right, the knave is commonly as good as the queen. With ace, king, knave, and three small trumps, it may be as well to lead the ace and king, on the chance of the queen falling. With ace, king, knave, and less than three, the approved practice is to lead the king, and wait for the return of the lead to finesse the knave.

With a hand requiring or justifying a trump lead,

<sup>1</sup> The above rule, and the exception, are equally applicable to plain suits.

the fact of an honour being turned up on your right must be disregarded, even with a certainty of its taking your partner's best card, the grand object being to get the command of trumps, not the first trick in them. Unless you wish the lead in trumps to be returned, do not (at least not early in the hand) lead through an honour, for the practice of leading through honours, except as a regular trump lead, has been fortunately given up. We say fortunately, for, so long as it prevailed, it was impossible to know whether the lead through the honour was a regular lead of trumps or not. At the same time, an experienced player may exercise his discretion as to returning the lead up to a high honour, especially if he can replace the lead in his partner's hand and so enable him to lead through the honour a second time.

There is another case when you may avoid returning a lead of trumps, whether through an honour or not, *i.e.*, when your partner has evidently led from weakness or desperation in a peculiar condition of the game. Thus, when he leads a knave, you may generally take for granted that it is his best, for (in England) there is no recognised trump lead from knave with a higher in the hand. The lead of the ten may be from king, knave, ten, with or without others, and may place you in doubt unless you know that your partner cannot have both king and knave. In our opinion you should always, when third player, pass the ten of trumps unless you have only ace and another, and it is an object to secure two rounds, or unless you see your way clear to winning both that and the two following tricks. If the ten does not make, it forces an honour and compels your left-hand adversary to play up to you. It is quite painful to see an ace or king put upon a ten, evidently led from weakness; and it is impossible to play a fine or even safe game with a partner who cannot distinguish a forced lead from an ordinary or original

one. It is useless in any suit for the third player to put the queen on his partner's ten. One time for this lead (of the ten) is when the game is obviously lost, or in great jeopardy, unless your partner is strong in trumps. For example, your adversaries are three love, and your only trump, or highest of two or three, is the ten. The game is lost unless your partner has two honours, and your ten will materially strengthen him, if he has.

On the same principle, when, to enable you to win or save the game, it is necessary that the remaining cards should be placed in a particular manner, play as if you knew them to be so placed. This is the secret of many of the most celebrated instances of fine play. The French Amateur (who always makes Pitt and Burke partners against Fox and Sheridan) gives this example :

Fox and Sheridan are at the score of four, and, out of nine tricks played, have won six. Pitt and Burke must win the remaining four to save the game. Pitt has the ace and a small trump, with two cards of a suit of which Burke holds the best and last. There are six trumps remaining in the other hands. Fox plays a card of a suit in which Pitt (last player) has renounced. Pitt trumps with his ace and leads his small trump. Burke makes a successful finesse, takes out the trumps, and wins the fourth trick by his last card. This was the only way in which the game could have been saved : and it could not have been saved unless the trumps had been equally divided and the successful finesse had been open to Burke. Pitt, therefore, proceeded on the assumption that they were so divided. If he had trumped with his small trump, he could not have ensured a second lead of trumps, and Fox or Sheridan

must infallibly have made the seventh trick by trumping.<sup>1</sup>

The same state of things may justify or require a trump lead, when you have no trump that can be called strengthening, not even a nine; but the lead of a singleton in trumps with nothing in the hand of the player or the state of the score to justify it, strikes us to be reprehensible in the extreme. We do not go the length of saying with the champion of the old school, quoted by Mr. Clay, that the only justification for leading a singleton in trumps (presumably not an honour) is holding at least ace and king in the three remaining suits. But there should be strength in each of the three remaining suits sufficient to prevent the establishment of a long suit by the adversaries. There is also this essential objection. The first duty of a player is to decide, after a careful study of his cards, whether he is to play a superior or inferior part, whether he is to be commander or subordinate for the hand, whether he is to act on the offensive or defensive, to aim at winning or saving the game. Now with one trump and no great strength in other suits, you have no right to assume the command by forcing a trump lead on your partner, who, with a single honour and without what can be called strength in trumps, may manage to save the game, if you do not force him into the sacrifice of his best card at starting. Leave him to initiate the lead of trumps either by leading or asking for them. Begin with your high cards and watch for the signal: if it is not forthcoming, go on with them and force. If you have no high cards, *cadit questio*: you would be clearly wrong to lead the trump.

As for people who lead trumps because they are

<sup>1</sup> Three useful illustrations are given in Mr. Clay's chapter 'When to Disregard Rule.'

at a loss what else to lead, they might just as well take the most important step in life, go into orders, turn soldier or sailor, marry or get unmarried, from sheer lassitude and vacuity. It is Lord Derby's leap in the dark, repeated on a small scale. A trump lead almost always brings matters to a crisis, and should never be hazarded without a reason. If absolutely no semblance of a reason suggests itself, play any card rather than a trump; and if this blank state of mind is of frequent recurrence after a resolute effort to improve, we should address the dubitant pretty nearly as the French fencing-master addressed the late Earl of E. at the conclusion of six months' teaching: 'Milord, je vous conseille décidément d'abandonner les armes.'

The importance of the trump lead can hardly be over-estimated when we consider that (with the exception already hinted at) it should be returned immediately. Playing out high cards before returning the trump, is incurring the very risk the trump lead is intended to obviate. An amiable French gentleman, M. Guy de la Tour du Pin—who, by the way, once fought a duel about whist—on being reproached by a partner with not returning the trump lead, made answer, '*Je ne suis pas votre domestique.*' Let us hope that there was something in the partner's tone to justify this most unreasonable retort. It is an aphorism of traditional respectability that the only excuses for not returning a trump are a fit of apoplexy or not having any. These, too, are the only available excuses for not leading trumps when your partner *asks* for them, and leading them in a manner to carry out his supposed wishes to the full.

'It (asking for trumps) consists in *throwing away an unnecessarily high card*, and it is requisite to pay great attention to this definition. Thus, if you have the deuce and three of a suit of which two rounds are played, by playing the three to the first round and the deuce to the

second, you have signified to your partner your wish that he should lead a trump as soon as he gets the lead.'

Mr. Clay, after a satisfactory defence of the fairness of the signal, goes on to contend that it should never be given simply because the demandant would rather have trumps played upon the whole. He regards it as tantamount to saying: 'I am so strong, that if you have anything to assist me, I answer for the game, or, at least, for a great score. Throw all your strength into my hand, abandon your own game, at least lead me a trump, and leave the rest to me.'

So grave does the resulting responsibility appear to this master of the art, that, he tells us, it is not in his recollection that he ever took this liberty with his partner when he held less than four trumps two honours, or five trumps one honour, along with cards in his or (obviously) in his partner's hand which made the fall of the trumps very plainly advantageous, adding: 'I am far from saying, that with the strength in trumps which I have described, it is always, or even generally, advisable to ask for trumps. I have only ventured to lay down that which, in my opinion, should be the minimum.'

Upon this conventional understanding, a partner with two or three trumps should lead the best, and if it makes, follow with the next best: with ace, queen, and another, lead the ace, then the queen, and then the other, unless checked by an indication that his left-hand adversary has no more. If the left-hand adversary holds out, it is generally best to give the third round, as the calling partner lies over him. Many a game has been missed by rigid adherence to the doctrine of not drawing two trumps for one. With four, unless headed by the ace, lead the lowest: with an ace and others, the ace. Keeping in view the main

object, the strengthening of your partner, no player of ordinary sagacity can be at a loss how to meet a call for trumps, *i.e.*, with a partner who abides by Mr. Clay's minimum.<sup>1</sup>

In returning a lead, whether in plain suits or trumps, if you have not decided strength, you should be guided by the same principle of self-sacrifice. Having only three originally, you should return the best; with four or more originally, the lowest. Thus, with ace, ten, three, and deuce, you should win with the ace, and return the deuce. With ace, ten, and deuce only, you win with the ace, and return the ten. This not only strengthens your partner: it enables him to count your hand:

<sup>1</sup> The inventor of this signal (Lord H. Bentinck) is said to have regretted his ingenuity. There will be additional occasion for regret if a suggested extension of it should be adopted into the recognised language of the game. A small card is led: the second player, holding queen, knave, and a small card of the suit, plays the queen, and subsequently the knave. We have recently heard it contended that this is a call. Now, the knave is played second from such a hand to win the trick and prevent a small card from making. The queen when played instead, fulfils the same function. She is not *thrown away*; she saves the knave at all events; and if this definition is to be disregarded, *playing* the queen third or fourth, with no higher card on the table, would be equally the commencement of a call. Even winning a trick with any card, and then playing the one next beneath it, would be a call, *e.g.*, winning with the ace and then playing the king; or playing the king second hand and then the queen.

The origin of the practice may throw light on this question. It began by throwing away, or dropping, a high card to induce a belief that you had no more, and were likely to trump. No adversary would be led to this belief by your playing a high card with no higher on the table.

There are cases in which it is better to call for trumps than to lead them, and the greatest confusion may ensue if the practice should be thus indefinitely extended. My partner plays a queen second hand which is taken by the ace. Am I to draw the ordinary inference that he has the king or no more of the suit? And what is *he* to do if led through a second time? Is he literally to throw away his knave, which has become second best, and may probably make a trick? The same difficulty arises when the king is played second from king and queen. Opinions may differ whether this mode of playing the queen, knave, or king, queen, &c., is technically a call. But the writer has not seen or heard of a single instance of its being actually put in practice.

‘In trumps, for instance (says Mr. Clay), when he holds one, with only one other left against him, he will very frequently know, as surely as if he looked into your hand, whether that other trump is held by you, or by an adversary. It follows from the above that you should not fail to remark the card in your own lead, which your partner returns to you, and whether that which he plays to the third round is higher or lower than that which he returned.’

The principle is partially applicable to original leads. Thus, if you have only two or three cards of a suit with nothing higher than a knave, lead the highest: if you are compelled to lead from ace, king, or queen, and a small one, lead the highest; and it is occasionally right with queen and two small ones, to lead the queen, thereby giving your partner the option of passing it, and at all events strengthening him where you are weak.

The safest leads are from sequences; and the rule in dealing with them is to lead the highest and put on the lowest.<sup>1</sup> But there are marked exceptions. In all suits, with ace and king, you begin with the king; but in trumps, with a major sequence of three or more, you begin with the lowest, because if the lower are not taken, your partner will infer that you have the higher; but if with three or four honours in plain suits, you begin with the queen or knave, your partner (if weak in trumps) might feel justified in trumping.<sup>2</sup> Bearing in mind that the odds are four or five to one against a suit going round a third time without a renounce, you will see at a glance why a less venturesome course must be pursued with plain suits than with trumps. Thus, you play off your ace and king in a plain suit instead of beginning with a small one: with king,

<sup>1</sup> This rule does not apply to *sub-sequences*. Thus with king, ten, nine, eight, you lead the eight.

<sup>2</sup> The latest innovation in the language of the game is to play the ace first when you have only ace and king.



queen and others, you lead the king in plain suits, and a small one in trumps. When your adversary's trumps are exhausted, *and you are sure of not losing the command*, a plain suit is played like the trump suit. Thus, with ace, king and others, you lead a small one.

There are other fixed original leads (specified in the books) which must be kept in mind, not only for your own direction in leading, but to enable you to draw inferences from what your partner or adversary has led. Thus with ace and four small cards (in plain suits), the ace; with ace and three, the lowest.<sup>1</sup> With ace, queen, knave, with or without others, the ace, then the queen. With an honour and three or more small cards, or with four or more small cards (not headed by a sequence), the lowest. For leads further on in the game, you may derive important information from the discard. A good player generally discards from his weak suit, or from the suit he does not wish led to him. There is no commoner or stronger sign of ignorance or inattention than instantly leading, without a defined motive, the suit from which your partner has *first* thrown away. You should rarely lead it unless you are strong enough in it to establish it without his help. C. took out the last trump. A., his partner, having the complete command in spades, threw away a club—the diamonds being out. C. played a club, brought in the long suit of his adversary (clubs) and lost the game.<sup>2</sup>

As the game proceeds, you will of course prefer leading through the strong hand and up to the weak.

<sup>1</sup> This is one of the points in which the best Paris players differ from the English. With ace and three small cards, they play the ace. Another is in leading from king, knave, ten *in trumps*: they lead the knave: we the ten.

<sup>2</sup> When the remaining trumps are with the adversaries, and there is no chance of bringing in a strong suit, it may be advisable to discard from it so as to keep what strength you can in the strong suit or suits of the adversaries.

Do not lead to force your partner, or on the chance of forcing him, unless you are strong in trumps. We say 'or on the chance of forcing,' for nothing is more common than, after playing ace and king, to lead a third round in the hope that the partner will win with the queen *or* trump. If he is strong in trumps, this is bad either way; for assuming him to have the best card, the odds are that it will be trumped, whereas he might have got out trumps and been enabled to make it.

Mr. Clay lays down that four trumps with an honour is the minimum strength that justifies a force without a peculiar object, such as securing a double ruff or making sure of a trick to win or save the game, or unless your partner has invited the force, or unless the adversary has led or asked for trumps. 'This last exception,' he says, 'is the slightest of the justifications for forcing your partner when you are weak in trumps, but it is in most cases a sufficient apology.' But, it may be replied, if the adversary has led or asked for trumps, and you are weak in them, you should do all you can to strengthen instead of weakening your partner: instead of forcing *him*, force (if you can) the trump-asking or trump-leading adversary. This is the best use of good cards when the strength in trumps has been declared against you: but take care that it is the *strong* adversary you force. 'It follows that there can be but few whist offences more heinous than forcing your partner when he has led a trump (or refused to trump), and you are yourself not very strong in them.'

The following is a golden rule which should prevent an infinity of hesitation: 'With four trumps do not trump an uncertain card, *i.e.*, one which your partner may be able to win. With less than four trumps, and no honour, trump an uncertain card.' With a king and one, or the queen and two small trumps also, it is clearly wrong to trump an uncertain card, as it also is

when trumps have been played, and you have the best or last trump left, with a losing card to throw away. If you are weak in trumps, or your partner has led trumps, trump a card which he would otherwise be obliged to trump; especially a thirteenth card when you are second hand, thereby compelling the third hand to trump. Whether, when third hand, you should trump a thirteenth card, must be decided by circumstances.

When your partner (obviously leading from ace, queen, knave) leads ace and queen, it is generally best not to trump his queen, although the king is evidently in the fourth hand; for then his suit is cleared. The peculiar object of dread to Lever was 'that confounded last trump in one's partner's hand: ' he having had his own long suit repeatedly cut short by it. There are occasions also when it is advisable to give a trick with the view of getting led up to, but Mr. Clay says: 'Do not give away a certain trick by refusing to ruff, or otherwise, unless you see a fair chance of making *two* by your forbearance.' Young players should be especially cautioned against giving away sure tricks. They sometimes suffer two or three tricks to be made in a long suit by withholding the long trump, though they have nothing else to do with it.

On the other hand, eagerness to trump with strength in trumps shows ignorance or defiance of all sound principle; for you weaken yourself, and you deceive your partner, besides depriving him of the advantage of his position as fourth player, with possibly a commanding tenace. If a good player trumps a doubtful card, the inference is that he is weak in trumps: if he refuses, that he has four at least, or a guarded honour: if he refuses to trump a known winning card, take it for granted that he is strong, and at the very first opportunity lead a trump. It is not unusual for moderate players, when their ace of trumps is a singleton,

to lead it at once ; the partner infers that it is a singleton, and has the option of resuming the lead and drawing two for one. This lead cannot, like a lead from another singleton, mislead or entrap the partner. But it prematurely exposes the hand, and may clear the suit for an adversary. By leading a singleton ace in a plain suit, besides inviting a force, you give up the chance of catching an adversary's honour, and the only contingency against you (an improbable one) is your partner leading the king. The lead of a singleton king is wrong, except in trumps when your partner has turned up an ace. Always consider before leading what inference your partner will be entitled to draw from your lead, and what effect it may have upon his hand, as by sacrificing one of his best cards without benefiting you.

The play of the second hand is more easily reducible to rule than that of the first. The cases of most frequent application are detailed in the books. Mr. Clay says :

‘Playing high cards, when second to play, unless your suit is headed by two or more high cards of equal value, or unless to cover a high card, is to be carefully avoided.

‘With two or three cards of the suit played, cover a high card. Play a king, or a queen, or a knave, or ten, &c.

‘With four cards, or more, of the suit played, do not cover, unless the second best of your suit is also a valuable card. Thus with a king or queen, and three or more small cards, do not cover a high card ; but if, along with your king or queen, you hold the ten, or even a nine, cover a queen or a knave.

“With king and another, not being trumps, do not play your king, unless to cover a high card.

‘With king and another, being trumps, play your king.’

The reason he gives for this distinction is, that the ace is not generally led from except in trumps, but this is only true of the higher order of players, who see the value of an ace as a card of re-entry.

‘With queen and another,’ he continues, ‘whether trumps or not, play your small card, unless to cover.’ Despite of this recognised maxim, many respectable players are constantly trying to snatch a trick with the queen, and exult in their occasional success; forgetting that the maxim is based on a careful calculation of the chances, and that the conventional language is confused by contravening it.

With knave, ten, or nine, and one small card, play the small card, unless to cover. With king, queen, and one or more small cards, play the queen, except in trumps, when circumstances may justify you in giving your partner a chance of making the trick. With queen, knave, and one other, the knave: with more than one other, the smallest. The rationale of the general rule, to play your lowest card second, is given by Cavendish:

‘You presume that the first hand has led from strength, and if you have a high card in his suit, you lie over him when it is led again; whereas, if you play your high card second hand, you get rid of a commanding card of the adversary’s suit, and when it is returned, the original leader finesses against you. Besides this, the third player will put on his highest card, and, if it is better than yours, you have wasted power to no purpose.’

In the first lead, therefore, if you have ace and queen, with strength in trumps, you play a small card second hand, and wait for the return, the chances being that the lead is from the king. If you have five in the suit, and are weak in trumps, it may be advisable to play the queen. If the lead is a knave, or any other card indicating weakness, put on the ace. Putting the queen (when you have ace, queen) on the knave (a common and tempting practice) is simply sacrificing her if the king is with the third player, and uselessly giving up your command over the first if the

king is with the fourth (your partner). The king *must* be behind you. The lead of ten or nine may be either from weakness or strength; and (with ace, queen) you must be guided by circumstances, by the usual play of your adversary, by the state of your own hand, or (if the lead is not the first) by such indications as may have occurred.

With ace, queen, ten, play the queen. With ace, queen, knave, or with ace, queen, knave, ten, &c., the lowest of the sequence. With ace, king, knave, the king: then (in trumps, or if strong in trumps) wait for the chance of finessing or of catching the queen. In trumps with ace, king, knave, and a small card, it may be advisable to play the small card second hand; thereby securing the command on the return of the trump. With ace, king, and others in plain suits, the king: in trumps the lowest, unless you wish to stop the lead and give your partner a ruff. It is peremptorily laid down by Mr. Clay: 'Play an ace on a knave.' But surely this cannot be always right, for it gives up the command at once, and fulfils the precise purpose of the leader, which is presumably to clear the way for his partner. With ace and four small ones, some put on the ace second hand for the same reason which induces them to lead it with the same number of the suit. But the cases are essentially distinct; for by playing the ace second hand, you knowingly give up the advantage of lying over the leader in his strong suit.

The play of the third hand involves the theory of the Finesse, on which M. Deschappelles has left a fragment which makes us regret the want of his great work as we regret the lost books of Livy or the unreported speeches of Bolingbroke.

'In the high cards,' he says, 'the simple finesse is almost mechanical: nobody fails to practise it. There are, how-

ever, many cases which do not allow of it. We should habituate ourselves to keep the organ of attention constantly on the *qui vive*, so as only to do by choice, and after balancing the advantages, the things which seem to belong to routine. A moment of distraction or forgetfulness, and you haply fall into a fault which will ruin your reputation. I have seen skilful players finesse in a trick which would have given them the game, and others commit the same blunder in the last trick but one, with a trump in. Censure has no mercy for them : its thousand sharp and quick tongues are multiplied to defame you : you cannot appear anywhere for a week without running the gauntlet of an exaggerated recital and a mortifying inquiry.'

Nor is the punishment one whit too severe. In whist clubs or circles, a list of the grossest offenders should be hung up for a week, like the list of offenders against public decency in the parks, or of the defaulters or lame ducks on the Stock Exchange. We do not mean such offences as forgetting or mistaking a card, but such as forcing a partner who has led trumps or refused to trump, or finessing in the trick by which the game might be saved or won, such, in short, as the commonest discretion and the merest modicum of good sense would obviate. Habitual carelessness also merits severe reprehension, such as playing a higher card instead of a lower, even a five instead of a four, or *vice versâ*, contrary to the fixed rules of the game. The last player, not being able to win the seven, plays the six : his partner takes for granted that he has no more, refrains from a meditated lead of trumps, plays for a ruff, and finds him with a five ! In a trump lead, the third player with ace, six, four, three, wins with the ace, returns the four, and afterwards plays the three. His partner, taking it for granted that he has played the best of two remaining cards, and that the remaining trump, the six, is in an adversary's hand, draws it, and haply loses the game. If he had returned the three and afterwards played the four, his partner would

have known to a certainty that the remaining trump was in his hand.

To the same category belongs the playing false cards. 'I hold in abhorrence the playing false cards,' is the emphatic denunciation of Mr. Clay. With exceptions, which he admits, we completely go along with him; and the practice may fairly be called un-English; for (he states) 'French players are dangerously addicted to false cards, and the Americans rarely play the right card if they have one to play which is likely to deceive everybody. They play for their own hands alone—the worst fault I know in a whist-player.' He puts the case of your partner winning with the highest instead of the lowest, as with the ace instead of the king, whence you assume that the king is against you, and find the whole scheme of your game destroyed. But take the every-day case—with the king led presumably from ace and king—of dropping the queen instead of the knave not as a call for trumps (for which it may be mistaken), but in the hope of stopping the suit. The suit is stopped, but your partner may be mischievously deceived; for on your having or not having the knave, depends the entire quality of your hand and the course of combined action he should pursue. False cards, therefore, should never be played unless at a period of the game when your partner is practically *hors de combat*, or when he is incapable of drawing the ordinary inferences which will be drawn by your adversaries. 'Why did you play that card?' was the question incautiously put to a good player by an astonished bystander. 'For the very sufficient reason,' was the answer in a loud stage whisper, 'that my partner is a *muff*.'

Habitual hesitation, also, is a very grave fault. It is by turns unfair as enlightening your partner and indiscreet as giving hints to your adversaries. Indicating the quality of the hand in any manner, by word or



gesture, should be suppressed by penalty ; and (as was the law under Hoyle's rules) any player who says he has the game in his hands, should lay his cards on the table and submit to have them called, for otherwise an unfair advantage is obtained ; all liability to a mistake in playing them being thereby avoided ; and the practice should be discountenanced as wasting instead of saving both time and temper by the discussion it creates. 'Like Mrs. Battle, we are decidedly for 'a clear fire, a clean hearth, and the rigour of the game.'<sup>1</sup> Unless the laws are regularly enforced, any occasional enforcement of them is open to the imputation of an unfair advantage ; so that uniform strictness is most favourable to a good understanding.

A moment's pause before the opening—and no good player will need more—for the formation of a plan is not to be confounded with hesitation. 'This moment,' observes M. Deschappelles, 'will be amply compensated: it will save ten : for the cards will flow rapidly as consequences : your adversaries will be unable to draw inferences ; and your partner, catching confidence from your self-possession, will become charged with the electric spark which fuses the *moi* into the intelligent and co-operating *nous*.'

But we are digressing and must return to the finesse, which depends so much on inference and the state of the score, that few general maxims can be laid down. Imprimis, the only finesse permissible in your partner's first lead is from ace and queen. If the queen wins, immediately return the ace in trumps, and also in plain suits, unless there are symptoms of trumping. In that case play trumps, if you are strong enough ; otherwise change the suit, and wait to see what your partner will

<sup>1</sup> *Elia*. First Series.—Hazlitt, although, like a certain dignified ornament of the church, constantly in hot water, was not equally remarkable for clean hands. *Elia* (Charles Lamb), playing whist with him, drily observed, 'If dirt was trumps, what hands you would hold !'

do ; or if you have a good trump, though weak, play it to strengthen him. A good player will, of course, finesse more frequently and more deeply in trumps than in plain suits, because he is generally sure of making the reserved card, and of making it at the most favourable moment. Thus, if with ace, king, knave, he finesses the knave and loses it, he is still in a better position than if he had played his king and left the queen guarded and held up behind him. With ace, knave, ten, or king, knave, ten (in trumps), the ten may be finessed if two immediate rounds are not required. When weak in trumps, finesse deeply in the suit in which your partner is weak. This, though contrary to the general practice, is strongly recommended by Mr. Clay, as it saves your partner from being forced. The finesse of knave from king knave, cannot be recommended unless your partner has obviously led from weakness. Your partner wins with the queen and returns the lead with a small card : with king, ten, finesse the ten, for the ace is certainly held over you, and if the knave is in the same hand, you must lose both any way. This is an instance of what is called the finesse obligatory.

The chief difficulty of the Fourth Hand is in discriminating the rare instances in which the trick should not be taken. You have three cards left : ace, knave, and a small one ; your adversary with king, queen, ten, leads the king. If you take the king you win one trick : if you allow it to make, you win two. There are also occasions when you give the trick in order to compel the adversary to lead up to you in another suit. A common *ruse* (which Mr. Clay strongly condemns) is to hold up the ace when you have ace and knave and the adversary has led the king from king and queen. This is dangerous out of trumps, unless you are very strong in trumps and want to establish the suit, and then your partner may trump the second

round and be carried off on a wrong scent. In trumps, the opportunity can rarely arise with good players. An ace may sometimes be kept back with telling effect, not only in trumps, but with ace and four small cards in a plain suit; the trumps being out or with you, and three tricks required to win or save the game. If no other player has more than three, and the ace is kept back till the third round, the three tricks are secured.

But an inexperienced player cannot be recommended to risk a stroke of this kind; neither should we recommend him to resort to *underplay*, until he has advanced far enough to be initiated into the mysteries of the *grand coup*.<sup>1</sup> Play the plain, unpretending, unambitious game till the higher and finer class of combinations break upon you. On the other hand, don't shun any amount of justifiable risk. If, looking to the score and the number of tricks on the table, a desperate measure is called for, risk it; if great strength in trumps in your partner's hand is required to save the game, play your last trump, however weak in trumps. All ordinary rules must be set aside in this emergency: every available force must be instantly called into the field. Here is the crisis in which you must lead the king with only one small one in his train: as at Fontenoy and Steinkirk, there is nothing for it but for the *maison du roi* to charge. There are moments in whist when a *coup d'œil* is wanted like that of the dying Marmion:

Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,  
With Chester charge and Lancashire,  
Full upon Scotland's central host,  
Or victory and England's lost.

<sup>1</sup> The *grand coup* is getting rid of a superfluous trump which may compel you to win a trick and take the lead when you do not want it. It was the master-stroke, the *coup de Jarnac*, of Deschapelles. *Underplay* is when, retaining the best of a suit, you play a small one in the hope that your left-hand adversary will hold up the second best and allow your partner to make the trick with a lower card.

One of the chosen few being asked what he deemed the distinctive excellence of a fine player, replied, 'playing to the point.' Such a player plays almost every hand differently without once departing from the conventional language of the game. It is an excellence rarely attained or appreciated; and the great majority of players play on just the same whatever the state of the score or the number of tricks already made on either side. They not only run risks to secure three tricks when they only want one: we have seen a gentleman playing for the odd trick with six tricks made against him, deliberately give away the seventh by declining to trump for fear of being over-trumped! We have seen another take out the card that would have won the game, look at it, fumble with it, and then put it back again.

Nelson told his captains at Trafalgar, that any one of them who did not see his way clearly, could not go far wrong if he laid his ship alongside a ship of the enemy. No whist-player can go far wrong who wins a trick when the game is growing critical. We do not say with Hoyle: 'Whenever you are in doubt, win the trick;' for we have heard puzzle-headed people appeal to this maxim after trumping the leading card of their partner's long suit, or trumping a doubtful card with the last or best trump, or with the solitary guard to a king, or with one of four trumps which constituted their strength. But we say: when you are in doubt with the adverse pack of tricks dangerously mounting up, win the trick. Hesitation without knowledge makes matters worse. Instead of snatching a grace beyond the reach of art, the hesitating player commonly commits a blunder beyond the reach of speculation, and tempts one to exclaim with Johnson, 'You must have taken great pains with yourself, sir: you could not naturally have been so very stupid.'

Few readers can have forgotten the bitter comment

of Rasselas after Imlac had enumerated the qualities needed to excel in poetry: 'Enough, thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet.' An enumeration of the qualities needed to shine in whist might provoke a similar retort. In the famous passage which Mr. Disraeli borrowed of M. Thiers, describing the qualifications and responsibilities of a great commander, we find: 'At the same moment, he must think of the eve and the morrow—of his flanks and his reserve; he must calculate at the same time the state of the weather and the moral qualities of his men. . . . Not only must he think—he must think with the rapidity of lightning; for on a moment more or less depends the fate of the finest combinations, and on a moment more or less depends the glory or the shame. Doubtless all this may be done in an ordinary manner by an ordinary man; as we see every day of our lives ordinary men making successful ministers of state, successful speakers, successful authors. But to do all this with genius is sublime.'

Something very similar might be said of a great whist-player,—indeed has been said by M. Deschappelles,<sup>1</sup> who was himself the great sublime he drew. He must watch and draw inferences from three hands besides his own: he must play twenty-six cards instead of thirteen: he must follow the shifting condition of four suits; he must calculate at the same time each phase of the game, and the moral and mental qualities of the players. Are they strong or

<sup>1</sup> Deschappelles, late in life became a republican, and was supposed to have been mixed up in some of the attempts at revolution in the earlier days of Louis Philippe. His papers were seized, and it was found that he had drawn up a list of persons in society to be made short work of, with the reasons for their elimination from this world. Amongst them was an elderly acquaintance whose name was set down thus: 'Vatry (Alphie); to be guillotined:—Reason:—*Citoyen inutile*.' Vatry was a bad whist-player.

weak, bold or cautious, frack or tricky and given to false cards? He must think with intuitive rapidity and sagacity. If he miscalculates, or loses the key to a single combination, he is lost. We see ordinary men making tolerably good whist-players, but the fine whist-player is as rare as the great commander; and to the *beau idéal* one might be applied what the Irishman predicated of a finished Irish gentleman—that there would be nothing like him in the world, *if you could but meet with him*.

Not only did we never meet with or hear of a whist-player who could venture to boast with Turenne that he never fought a battle that he did not deserve to win; but we have heard an excellent one adopt the aphorism, attributed to the Iron Duke, that a battle was a game in which those that made the fewest blunders won. Or a parallel may be drawn between the paladin of the whist-table, and the damsel in the play who took her married sister's fault upon herself, and is thus apostrophised by her brother-in-law, 'Quoi! vous, Marie, vous, la Vertu même!' Her reply is exquisite for feminine self-knowledge and tact: 'Oh! la Vertu, la Vertu! tout le monde a ses heures ou ses moments.' The most consummate skill, like Virtue herself, is not safe against a slip. Did not the late Earl Granville lose a rubber, after giving the long odds in thousands, by forgetting the seven of hearts? Did not Henry Lord de Ros lose one on which three thousands pounds was staked, by miscounting a trump? Did not, only the other day, the Daniel or Gamaliel of the Turf Club fail to detect a palpable revoke, to the astonishment and (it must be owned) gratification of the bystanders, some of whom went home consoled and elevated in their own self-esteem by his default?

But let no one hurry to the conclusion that skill is of minor importance because it is sometimes found tripping, or because the fine player may be often seen

vainly struggling against cards, when, like the good man struggling against adversity, he is a spectacle for the gods. 'Human life,' writes Jeremy Taylor, 'is like playing at tables: the luck is not in our power; but the playing the game is.' For 'tables,' read whist. Independently of the intellectual gratification, skill will prove an ample remuneration in the long run for the pains bestowed in acquiring it. If only one trick per hand were won or lost by play, the per-centage would be immense; but two or three tricks per hand are frequently so won or lost. Three or four times over in a single sitting have we seen bad players score three or four with hands which, held by good, would infallibly have made the game. With tolerably equal cards, play must turn the balance: with fortune *pro*, it indefinitely increases the gain: with fortune *con*, it indefinitely diminishes the loss. It must have been the effect of irritability after losing to bunglers that made high authorities deny so obvious a truth. We are quite sure that in their cooler moments they would agree with us.

A curious piece of evidence bearing on this subject was given at the De Ros trial by a distinguished whist-player, who stated that he had played regularly for about the same stakes during twenty years; that his winnings had averaged 1,500*l.* a year, making 30,000*l.* in the aggregate, but that he had undergone two consecutive years of ill luck, during which he lost 8,000*l.* Another witness, a captain in the navy, who had realised a regular income by his skill, was asked whether he was not in the habit of dining on boiled chicken and lemonade when he had serious work in hand; and the alleged training (which he denied) was no imputation on his sagacity. No man flushed with food or wine, *vinoque ciboque gravatus*, will play his best; and every man who regards his purse or his

reputation should leave off when he finds the sensation of confusion or fatigue stealing on him.

Although many of the best players play high, the highest players are by no means uniformly the best. It was stated from melancholy experience by De Quincy, that opium-eating in the earlier stages produces none of the beneficial or pleasurable effects : not till it has grown into a habit, does the inspiring or soothing influence begin. It is the same with high play, which unduly excites and agitates for a season ; although, if the purse and constitution hold out, it has been known to sharpen the observation and concentrate the attention to the utmost point which the player's natural capabilities enable him to reach. But this turning a relaxation and a pleasure into a business and a toil is to be deprecated, not recommended ; and a wise man (pecuniary considerations apart) would rather give up whist altogether than be compelled to play it under the implied condition that he was to keep his mind eternally upon the strain. It was this consideration possibly that drove Charles James Fox to hazard, although he boasted that he could gain 4000*l.* a year at whist, if he chose to set about it. Major Aubrey, who had tried both, declared that the greatest pleasure in life was winning at whist,—the next greatest pleasure, losing.

Women, particularly young women, should never play for sums which it is inconvenient for them to lose ; and a sum which is immaterial to a man of independent means may create an alarming deficit in a female budget dependent on an allowance or pin-money. The feminine organisation is opposed to their ever getting beyond the excitable perturbed fluttered stage : their hands may be read in their faces : they play recklessly to shorten the torment of suspense ; and it is fortunate if, along with their money, they do not lose both their temper and their good looks :



And one degrading hour of sordid fear,  
Stamp in a night the wrinkles of a year.

The charge of comparative disregard of truth which the male sex, with or without reason, are wont to bring against the female sex, derives plausibility from an effect stated by Byron :

The pretty creatures fib with such a grace,  
There's nothing so becoming to the face.

Upon this principle they should certainly avoid high play at any game, for there is nothing so *unbecoming* to the face. Hogarth's print of 'The Lady's Lost Stake' suggests another danger, which is also hinted at in 'The Provoked Husband' :

'Lord Townley: 'Tis not your ill hours that always disturb me, but as often the ill company that occasion these hours.

'Lady Townley: Sure, I don't understand you now, my lord. What ill company do I keep?

'Lord Townley: Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it; or perhaps men that are voluntary bubbles at one game in hopes a lady will give them fair play at another.'

When whist is merely taken up as one of the weapons of coquetry, there is no great mischief to be apprehended; although *écarté* or chess would seem more suited to the purpose, and give better hope of a situation like that of Ferdinand and Miranda. 'Sweet lord, you play me false,' is ill replaced by 'Sweet lady, you have revoked.'

Henri Beyle (Stendhal), musing over an interrupted *liaison* and a lost illusion, exclaims: 'After all, her conduct is rational. She was fond of whist. She is fond of it no longer; so much the worse for me if I am still fond of whist.' So much the better for him, as he had still an inexhaustible resource; and he would have gained nothing by abandoning it. She was no

longer fond of whist, because she was no longer fond of him.

It is a common fallacy, mischievously rife among the fair sex, that without the gift of extraordinary memory, it is impossible to become a good whist-player: the fact being that memory has little or nothing to do with the real understanding or finest points of the game. What, for instance, has memory to do with the opening lead, which has the same relative importance that Lord Lyndhurst attributed to the opening speech in a cause? What has memory to do with trumping or not trumping a doubtful card; or with returning the best with three or the lowest with four; or with returning the trump lead immediately; or with answering the call for trumps; or with taking or not taking the trick that wins or saves the game; or with numberless emergencies in which you have only to look at your hand, the tricks on the table, and the score?

Of course, a certain number of rules and maxims must be learnt; but it is not more difficult to learn these than to learn the Catechism; and a lady might as reasonably complain that she could not become a good Christian for want of memory, as that she could not become a good whist-player by reason of that defect, which, in nine cases out of ten, is purely imaginary. People remember well enough what they care to remember, or what fixes their attention by interesting them. This depends on character, habits, and powers of appreciation. Whilst the man of cultivated taste and fine sense of humour is laying up a stock of choice anecdotes and fine passages, an old maid in a country town will be growing into the living chronicle of all the scandalous gossip of the last fifty years, complaining all the time of her memory. The measures are the same, but the one is filled with pearls of price, the other with glass beads and knicknackery. The discriminating reminiscent, instead of being envied for

memory, should be commended for observation, judgment, quickness of perception and apopros.

Alleged forgetfulness at whist, as in most other things, is far more frequently inattention than forgetfulness. The fall of the cards has not been watched, and the proper inferences have not been drawn at the moment. A player cannot be said to have forgotten what he never knew. If, for example, at the end of a second round, he had clearly drawn the inference that the best card remained with one adversary and that the other had no more of the suit, this state of things would suggest itself naturally and without an effort when the suit was played again :

‘ With care (says Mr. Clay) and with his eyes never wandering from the table, each day will add to the indications which he will observe and understand. He will find that mere memory has less to do with whist than he imagines, that it matters little whether the five or the six is the best card left of a suit, as long as he knows, which he generally ought to know, who has that best card. Memory and observation will become mechanical to him, and cost him little effort, and all that remains for him to do will be to calculate at his ease the best way of playing his own and his partner’s hands, in many cases as if he saw the greater portion of the cards laid face upwards on the table. He will then be a fine whist-player.’

Without being a fine whist-player, he may be a capital second-rate, a thoroughly reliable partner, and one with whom no one can be dissatisfied to sit down. This is the grand point, and this (we repeat) may be attained with no more than the average amount of memory with which men and women manage to get on creditably through life. One of the best London whist-players is below the average in this particular. Nor will calling him so appear paradoxical to any who accept M. Deschappelles’ division :

‘ We will suppose a parabola described by a bombshell

of which the culminating point shall be the seventh trick. On this side, it is invention which holds sway; on the other, it is calculation. Attention and memory are at the base, whilst sagacity, seated at the top, distributes the work, calls by turns on the organs that are to complete it, excites and circumscribes their efforts, and assigns them at the appointed moment the repose necessary to the restoration of their strength. . . . When there are no more than five or six cards remaining in the hand, the fine and delicate faculties of intelligence have resigned and repose. Mathematical calculation is at the helm: the simplest calculation disengaged from the unknown. Then it is that the most commonplace player is entitled to claim equality with the finest; it is a property which he has acquired by his labour; the elements of it are open to all the world. They are beyond the domain of the aristocracy of the brain and the susceptibility of the organs: beyond that of poetry and imagination; but they are open to all, like the right to breathe and speak good prose! . . . . With regard to sagacity, how do you know that you are wanting in it? Do but apply your mind to the matter in hand, *age quod agis*, and you will see that you have as much as another. I can give as proof the manner in which people lead at present; even at our weakest parties, I am surprised to see that it is almost always the right card that is led. This is owing to our *grande tactique*, with which every one is imbued.'

The *grande tactique* is the strong or long-suit system; with which, we regret to say, every one is not imbued amongst us, or we should not so frequently hear, at the end of a long, puzzled, and unreflecting pause, 'I really do not know what to lead.' The lady or gentleman who habitually indulges in this apostrophe, had better say at once, 'I really do not know how to play.'

Every civilised country has had its Augustan age or ages. We have had our Elizabethan age, our age of Queen Anne, and what was also an Augustan age though yet unnamed—the age when Byron, Moore,

Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rogers, Sydney Smith, Hallam, Brougham, Canning, &c., were the central figures of the group. On its being recently remarked that there was nothing now coming on to replace what must be soon passing away—that almost all the highest reputations in all walks are of full twenty years' standing or more: that we have no rising poets, artists, novelists, or orators,—‘No!’ exclaimed a far-famed beauty and wit, ‘and no lady-killers such as I remember in my heyday, before whom one felt bound to succumb, as the belles of the *Spectator* succumbed to Beau Fielding, when he said of them: “Elles tombent comme des mouches.”’ Our fair friend might have added: ‘And no rising whist-players of the first-class: not one under middle-age, who has given proofs of undisputed genius.’

A master of the art (Lord H. Bentinck), who had survived a generation, was recently asked who were the best whist-players he ever knew. He instantly named three: the late Earl Granville, the Hon. George Anson, and Henry Lord de Ros. On being asked for the fourth he paused, but there was no need of hesitation: ‘Ed io anche sono pittore.’ No one would have accused him of undue assumption if he had followed the example of Lamartine, who, on being asked who was the first living French poet, drew himself up with an air of offended dignity, and replied, ‘Moi.’ The palm was popularly considered to lie between Lord Henry Bentinck and Mr. Clay, whose styles were so essentially different that an instructive parallel might be drawn between them after the manner of Plutarch. We regret to say that great whist-players resemble rival beauties in one respect. Rarely will one admit the distinguished merit, not to say superiority, of another.

The De Ros affair was a sad blow and a temporary discredit to whist-players, for some of them were unluckily seduced into acting on the penultimate Lord

Hertford's maxim: 'What would you do if you saw a man cheating at cards?' 'Bet upon him, to be sure.' Lord de Ros's methods of aiding his skill were only available for one hand in four,—when he dealt. He then contrived to turn an honour by what is called *sauter le coup*, and having marked the higher honours with his nail, he could see to whom they fell. During the burst of scandalous comment which followed the exposure, one of the 'bitter fools' of society, who had never been admitted to his intimacy, drawled out at Crockford's: 'I would leave my card at his house, but I fear he would mark it.' The retort was ready: 'That would depend on whether he considered it a *high* honour.' This repartee, popularly assigned to Lord Alvanley, was made by Charles Kinnaird Sheridan (the brother of the three gifted sisters of the race), whose untimely and deeply regretted death, in the bloom of his brilliant youth, was a *memento mori* which not the gayest or most thoughtless of his gay contemporaries could speedily shake off:

Manibus date lilia plenis :

Purpureos spargam flores, animamque nepotis

His saltem accumulem donis, et fungar inani

Munere.

There is a well-authenticated story of the late Lord Granville's devotion to whist. Intending to set out in the course of the afternoon for Paris, he ordered his carriage and four posters to be at Graham's at four. They were kept waiting till ten; when he sent out to say that he should not be ready for another hour or two, and that the horses had better be changed: they were changed three times in all, at intervals of six hours, before he started. When the party rose, they were up to their ankles in cards, and the ambassador (it was reported) was a loser to the tune of eight or ten thousand pounds. About this time there was a set at Brooks's (Lord Sefton, an excellent player, being

one) who played hundred guinea points besides bets. We still occasionally hear of 300*l.* and 500*l.* on the rubber, but five pound points are above the average : and many of the best players are content with two pound points (ten, bet) at the Turf, and half pounds at the Portland. A good deal of money is turned on the five to two (really nearer three to one) bet on the rubber after the first game.

In Paris (where the rubber counts four) the points are comparatively low, much in our opinion to the detriment of the game. During the period comprised in M. Louis Blanc's *Histoire de Dix Ans*, the stakes at the Cercle de l'Union were such that Count Achille Delamarre calculated his average rubber at 200 louis. There, and afterwards at the French Jockey Club, the level rate was two louis and ten bet, but the large *ad libitum* bets became so general that any one who cut in without joining in them was looked upon as an interloper. The principal players at the Union were Lord Granville (the English ambassador), Count Medem (secretary to the Russian embassy), Count Walewski, the Duc de Richelieu, General Michelski, Comte Deschapelles (the author), Comte Achille Delamarre, and M. Bonpierre : the three last, with Lord Granville, being esteemed the best of the lot.<sup>1</sup> Amongst the best Parisian players who have since come into the field (of green cloth) are Vicomte Paul Daru, Count d'Albon, Comte d'Andlau, Comte de Malart, Mr. Cumming, Count Morauski, Vicomte Ladislav de St.-Pierre, and his brother M. Maurice de St.-Pierre. The highest play during the last two or three years has been at the Petit Club de la rue Royale, where it ranges from 1 to 30, or 1 and 50, up to or above 1 and 100 louis : the points being stationary and the bets fluctuating. The scale of play has been raised above the usual level at Paris by the very high play at

<sup>1</sup> Deschapelles gave the preference to Delamarre, saying that, with him for a partner, he would not mind playing dummy against *Le Père Eternel*.

Baccarat, at which 16,000*l.* has been lost by one person in one night.<sup>1</sup>

There used to be high play at Berlin and Vienna. Count Palfy won enough at a single sitting of Prince John of Lichtenstein to build and furnish a château. It was shown to the loser, who, on being asked how he liked it, replied: 'Pas du tout; cela a tout-à-fait l'air d'un château de cartes.' Count Brühl wrote a treatise on whist, which, we regret to say, we have been unable to procure. There is a current anecdote of Count Rechberg, late Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Austria, which justifies a surmise that he also is a proficient. His left-hand adversary (*proh pudor*, an Englishman) made so desperate though successful a finesse, that his excellency uttered an exclamation of surprise, whereupon the gentleman offered a bet that the count himself should acknowledge that he had a sound reason for his play. It was taken, and he then coolly said, 'Why, I looked over your hand.' This gentleman must have graduated under the Artful Dodger, who, when playing dummy in Fagin's den, is commended for 'wisely regulating his play by the result of his observations on his neighbour's cards.'

Some thirty-five years since a remarkable set used to meet in Berlin at Prince Wittgenstein's, including Count Alopeus, the Russian Minister, General Nostitz, Sir Henry Bulwer (then attached to the Berlin embassy), and the Duke of Cumberland (afterwards King of Hanover). Another of the royal family, the late Duke of York, played whist a great deal and lost a great deal of money at it, as well he might, for he invariably showed by his face whether he was satisfied or dissatisfied with his cards, and played them indifferently into the bargain. He played pony points (25*l.*) and fifty bet, making the full or bumper rubber 250*l.* One evening, having won three full rubbers of a wealthy

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that this was written in April, 1869.



*parvenu*, he was reluctantly reminded that there was a prior loss of some four thousand pounds to be set off. 'No, no,' he protested, 'that will never do. We have nothing to do with old scores;' and the man was fool enough to pay. There is no royal road to whist, and as royal personages with the best natural dispositions rarely submit to be taught, it is fortunate that the kingly power has been limited since Canute, who had a courtier hanged for check-mating him, and would doubtless have had him hanged, drawn, and quartered for claiming a revoke at whist. This great and wise king had evidently come to the conclusion that the occasional execution of a courtier *pour encourager les autres* inculcated a moral more practically than getting wet feet through the disobedience of the waves.

When Napoleon was at Würtemberg, 'he used to play whist in the evening, but not for money, playing ill and inattentively. One evening when the queen dowager was playing with him against her husband and his daughter (the Queen of Westphalia, the wife of Jerome), the king stopped Napoleon, who was taking up a trick that belonged to them, saying, "Sire, on ne joue pas ici en conquérant."'<sup>1</sup>

It must be admitted as a partial excuse for absolutism in such matters, that the spirit of play absorbs or deadens every other thought and feeling. Horace Walpole relates that, on a man falling down in a fit

<sup>1</sup> *Diaries of a Lady of Quality*. Second edition, p. 128. Frederic the Great was in the habit of kicking the shins of the *savans* who ventured to differ from him. When Peter the Great was on a visit of inspection on board an English line-of-battle ship at Portsmouth, he expressed a wish to witness the operation of *keel-hauling*, which consists in dragging the subject under water from one side of the ship to the other by means of a rope passed under the keel. He was told that this was contrary to law, so far as Englishmen were concerned. 'If that is all, you can take one of my suite,' was his unconcerned rejoinder. It would be edifying to watch the countenance of Sir Edward Cust, General Grey, or one of the Lords in Waiting, when told off for such an experiment by our gracious Sovereign.

before the bay window of White's, odds were instantly offered and taken to a large amount against his recovery, and that, on its being proposed to bleed him, the operation was vehemently resisted as unfair. When Lord Thanet was in the Tower for the O'Connor riot, three friends—the Duke of Bedford, the Duke de Laval, and Captain Smith—were admitted to play whist with him and remain till the lock-up hour of eleven. Early in the sitting, Captain Smith fell back in a fit of apoplexy, and one of the party rose to call for help. 'Stop,' cried another, 'we shall be turned out if you make a noise; let our friend alone till eleven: we can play dummy, and he'll be none the worse, for I can read death in his face.'<sup>1</sup>

The profession of medicine has turned out some good whist-players. Three celebrated physicians, being, like the surgeons in *Zeluco*, at a loss how to fill up the time it was thought decent to occupy on the case of a noble patient, set to at dummy. The patient, if there had really been much the matter with him, would have found himself in the predicament of the survivor of the Horatii;

Que vouliez-vous qu'il fit contre trois ?  
— Qu'il mourût.

The clergy, especially in the West of England, were formerly devoted to whist. About the beginning of the century there was a whist club in a country town of Somersetshire, composed mostly of clergymen, that met every Sunday evening in the back parlour of a barber. Four of these were acting as pall bearers at

<sup>1</sup> 'One night, turning very faint, I struggled through the rubber, then got up and left the room, and fell on the landing with a crash that brought the other three players to my side. As I was recovering my senses, I heard one of my late adversaries say, "He never can have played the hand through without a revoke," and I saw him steal away to see. His partner followed, to aid in the examination of the tricks, and mine to see fair play, leaving me stretched as I fell.' (*Ex Relatione* S. P. one of the finest players of the new school.)

the funeral of a reverend brother, when a delay occurred from the grave not being ready, or some other cause; and the coffin was set down in the chancel. By way of whiling away the time, one of them produced a pack of cards from his pocket, and proposed a rubber.<sup>1</sup> The rest gladly assented, and they were deep in their game, using the coffin as their table, when the sexton came to announce that the preparations were complete. We have carefully verified the fact that they played long whist, and we suspect that whist has been less popular in the church since the introduction of short, by reason of its inferior gravity. The principle is indicated by Sydney Smith in his qualified defence of angling: 'I give up fly-fishing: it is a light, volatile, dissipated pursuit. But ground bait, with a good steady float that never bobs without a bite, is an occupation for a bishop, and in no way interferes with sermon-making.'

We have seen short whist played by a member of the episcopal body, and a very eminent one, the venerable Bishop of Exeter (Philpots): one adversary being the late Dean of St. Paul's (Milman): the other an American diplomatist (Mason), and his partner a distinguished foreigner whose whist was hardly on a par with his scientific acquirements and social popularity. The

<sup>1</sup> This story (it is to be hoped apocryphal) was currently told of the writer's uncle, the Rev. Richard Abraham, Vicar of Ilminster and Chaffcombe; a man distinguished by learning and wit. He resided mostly at Bath on the plea of ill health, and frequently joined the card-table of Mrs. Beadon, the wife of the Bishop of Bath and Wells. 'Mr. Abraham,' said the Bishop one morning, 'it strikes me that, if you are well enough to sit up half the night playing whist at the Rooms, you must be well enough to do duty at your living.' 'My Lord,' was the reply, 'Mrs. Beadon will tell you that late whist acts as a tonic or restorative to dyspeptic people with weak nerves.' The lady at once made the case her own; and her power over her right reverend lord was so well established that the diocese credited her with the entire distribution of his patronage. After his death, she became well known to the world of May Fair by her Sunday whist parties, which rivalled those of Lady Tancred and the old Lady Salisbury who was burnt.

two church dignitaries played a steady sound orthodox game. The bishop bore a run of ill luck like a Christian and a bishop, but when (after the diplomatist had puzzled him by a false card) the Count lost the game by not returning his trump, the excellent prelate looked as if about to bring the rubber to a conclusion as he once brought a controversy with an archbishop, namely, by the bestowal of his blessing; which the archbishop, apparently apprehensive of its acting by the rule of contraries, earnestly entreated him to take back.

The famous 'Billy Butler,' vicar of Frampton, got the offer of a rich piece of preferment by finding a fox in the 'open,' when the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV.) was anxious for a easy run. Many a good living has been gained by whist-playing; this being considered an indispensable qualification by discerning patrons (lay and episcopal) in the olden time. Our own opinion is that, if the spirit of the times no longer admits of its being exacted in candidates for holy orders, the being well up in Pole, Cavendish, or Clay should command a handsome number of marks in all competitive examinations, civil and military. We throw out this suggestion for the serious consideration of the Cabinet.

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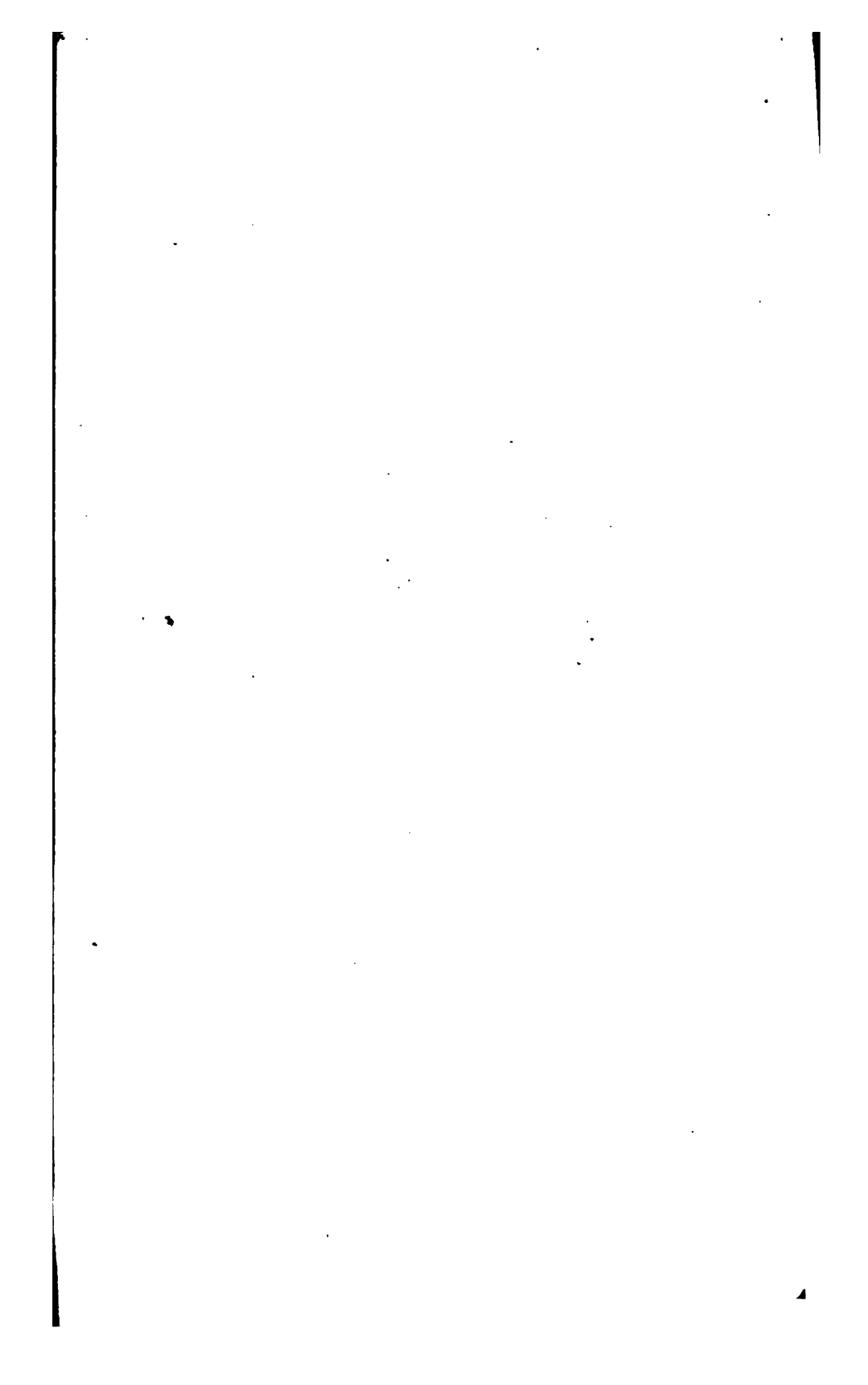
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